











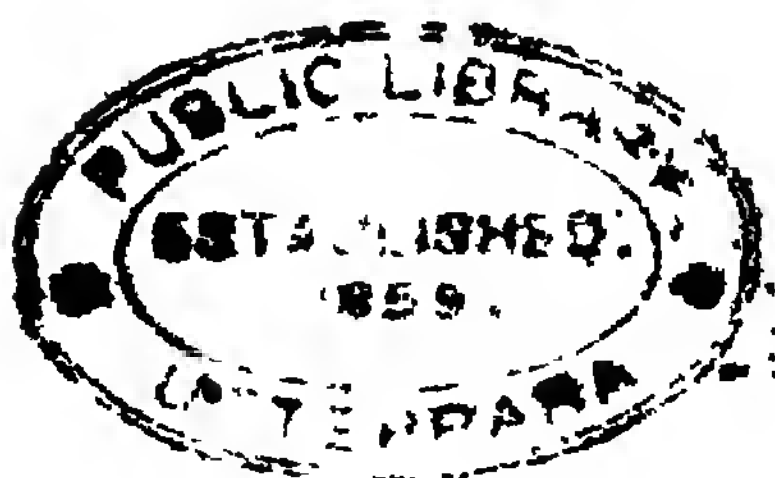


# GREAT ENGLISH POEMS

Selected and edited  
by

C. B. YOUNG, M.A. (OXON)

*Sometime Head of the English Department  
University of Delhi*



GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
AMEN HOUSE, LONDON, E. C. 4 .  
EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK  
TORONTO CAPETOWN MELBOURNE  
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS  
GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE  
PUBLISHER TO THE  
UNIVERSITY

 *First published 1923*

Printed in British India by B. C. DUTT, at the Art Press,  
20, British Indian Street, Calcutta and Published by  
Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, Calcutta.

# CONTENTS

MILTON	... Lycidas ...	...	...	1
	... The Garden of Eden.	...	...	6
MARVELL	... Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland	...	...	11
DRYDEN	... Mac Flecknoe	...	...	15
POPE	... The Rape of the Lock	...	...	21
GRAY	... The Progress of Poesy	...	...	42
	... The Bard	...	...	46
COWPER	... On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture	✓		50
WORDSWORTH	... Lines composed near Tintern Abbey			53
	... Ode Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood			58
SCOTT	... Britain's Winter	...	...	64
COLERIDGE	... Christabel	...	...	66
BYRON	... Venice	...	...	78
	... The Pirate Father's Return	...	...	81
SHELLEY	... Ode to the West Wind	✓		88
	... Adonais	...	...	99
KEATS	... The Eve of St Agnes	...	...	106
	... Ode to a Nightingale	...	...	119
Tennyson	... The Lotos-Eaters	...	...	121
	... The Home-Coming	...	...	127
BROWNING	... The Last Ride Together	...	...	132
	... Rabbi Ben Ezra	...	...	135
ARNOLD	... The Scholar Gipsy	...	...	142
MORRIS	... The Haystack in the Floods	...	...	149
SWINBURNE	... In a Forsaken Garden	...	...	153
BRIDGES	... 'There is a hill beside the silver Thames'	...	...	155
WATSON	... Wordsworth's Grave	...	...	158
THOMPSON	... The Hound of Heaven	...	...	164
GIBSON	... Flannan Isle	...	...	169
BROOKE	... The Great Lover	...	...	172
OWEN	... Strange Meeting	...	...	174
	Notes	...	...	177



## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

IN this edition a few errors, of both printer and editor, have been corrected, and some of the notes have been revised and added to. In the first edition, misunderstandings due to the delays in communications between Britain and India led to the inclusion of four inferior lines in Wordsworth's great *Ode* (which the poet himself cut out from his 1820 edition) and the absence of notes to ll. 1-36 of *Britain's Winter*. These defects have now been rectified.

C. B. YOUNG

## PREFACE

To add to the innumerable Selections of English poems might seem to be unpardonably superfluous. But despite the multiplicity of anthologies, in Delhi University we looked in vain for one which would exactly meet our needs. We desired a small collection of absolutely standard poems, representing most of the greater English poets, together with (at most) five or six representative poems of recent times (to circumvent the ubiquitous pirate). Only Hales' *Longer English Poems* and Brett's *Representative English Poems* came near to filling the bill. Most others contained too large and mixed an assortment, and too many very short poems. After ringing the changes on Hales and Brett several times we found ourselves gravelled for lack of new matter. Hence the present book. It aims first at including specimens from the greatest poets in English. It excludes from among them Spenser, because of what Jonson called his 'no language'; Shakespeare, because always otherwise included in the curricula of Indian universities; Burns, because his best poems are in dialect, Donne, T. S. Eliot and a few others, as too obscure. Secondly, it rejects the very short poem as not giving the student enough to bite on. Thirdly, whole poems have been preferred to extracts, unless, as happens several times, the best or most characteristic work of a poet was in a poem too long for entire inclusion.

In the annotation my aim has been to strike a middle path between dealing with every difficulty and arbitrarily selecting a few special points. Simple synonyms and very short verbal explanations have been relegated to footnotes. I have carefully refrained from saving students from the salutary trouble of consulting a dictionary, and have taken *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* as the gauge of what words can be safely left unexplained. No word in that dictionary is explained except for some specific reason, of ambiguity, or of special interest.

I have to acknowledge gratefully the help of Mr A. Bhattacharyya, Reader in English in Delhi University, in the choice of poems; and the personal interest taken and help rendered throughout the work of preparing the book by the staff of the Oxford University Press.

C. B. Y.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE publisher's thanks are due to the following for permission to include copyright poems: The Clarendon Press for Robert Bridges' *'There is a hill beside the silver Thames'*; Messrs George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd for Wordsworth's *Grave* from 'The Poems of Sir William Watson, 1878-1935'; Mr Wilfrid Meynell and Messrs Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd for Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven*; Mr Wilfrid Gibson and Messrs Macmillan & Co. Ltd for *Flannan Isle* from 'Collected Poems, 1905-1925'; Messrs Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd. for Rupert Brooke's *The Great Lover*; and Messrs. Chatto & Windus for Wilfred Owen's *Strange Meeting*.

## *Lycidas*

A LAMENT FOR A FRIEND DROWNED, IN HIS PASSAGE FROM  
CHESTER ON THE IRISH SEAS, 1637

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more,  
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
And with forced fingers rude,  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year. 5  
Bitter constraint, and sad occasion dear,  
Compels me to disturb your season due:  
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,  
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer: 10  
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew  
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.  
He must not float upon his watery bier  
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,  
Without the meed of some melodious tear.  
Begin then, s'sters of the sacred well, 15  
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,  
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string  
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse,  
So may some gentle Muse  
With lucky words favour my destined urn, 20  
And as he passes turn,  
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud  
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,  
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill.  
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared 25  
Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,  
We drove afield, and both together heard  
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,  
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,  
Oft till the star, that rose at evening bright, 30  
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering  
wheel.

---

4 **forced** : constrained by grief. **rude** : rough 6. **dear** : touching me closely. 14 **melodious tear** : musical lament 19 **Muse** : poet inspired by a muse



Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,  
 Tempered to the oaten flute ;  
 Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel  
 From the glad sound, would not be absent long, 35  
 And old Damætas loved to hear our song.

But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
 Now thou art gone and never must return!  
 Thee, shepherd, thee the woods, and desert caves,  
 With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown, 40  
 And all their echoes mourn.

The willows, and the hazel copses green,  
 Shall now no more be seen,  
 Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.  
 As killing as the canker to the rose, 45  
 Or taint-worm, to the weanling herds that graze,  
 Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear  
 When first the white thorn blows;  
 Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherds' ear.

Where were ye, nymphs, when the remorseless  
 deep 50

Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?  
 For neither were ye playing on the steep  
 Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,  
 Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,  
 Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream: 55  
 Ay me, I fondly dream!

Had ~~ye been there~~—for what could that have done?  
 What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,  
 The Muse herself, for her enchanting son  
 Whom universal nature did lament, 60  
 When by the rout that made the hideous roar,  
 His gory visage down the stream was sent,  
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what boots it with incessant care  
 To tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade, 65  
 And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?  
 Were it not better done, as others<sup>4</sup> use,  
 To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,  
 Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?

---

47. wardrobe : dress. 52. steep: mountain. 54. Mona : Anglesey.  
 55 Deva : the river Dee 66 meditate : practise (Latin sense).

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise 70  
(That last infirmity of noble mind)

To scorn delights, and live laborious days ;  
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,  
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,  
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears, 75

And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'  
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears ;

'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,  
Nor in the glistening foil

Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies, 80

But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,

And perfect witness of all-judging Jove ;

As he pronounces lastly on each deed, .

Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.'

O fountain Arethuse, and thou holloured flood, 85

Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,

That strain I heard was of a higher mood:

But now my oat proceeds,

And listens to the herald of the sea

That came in Neptune's plea ; 90

He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,

What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle  
swain?

And questioned every gust of rugged wings

That blows from off each beaked promontory,

They knew not of his story, 95

And sage Hippotades their answer brings,

That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed;

The air was calm, and on the level brine

Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.

It was that fatal and perfidious bark 100

Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses, dark,

That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,

His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,

Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge, 105

Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.

---

70. clear : free from sin. 78. mortal soil : earth. 81, aloft : in heaven. 88 oat : shepherd's pipe. 90. in N.'s plea : on N. 's behalf 93. of rugged wings : rough-winged. 106. sanguine : bloodstained

'Ah! who hath rett', quoth he, my dearest pledge?  
 Last came, and last did go,  
 The pilot of the Galilean lake,  
 Two massey keys he bore of metal twain 110  
 (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain),  
 He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:  
 'How well could I have spared for thee, young swain.  
 Enow of such as for their bellies' sake,  
 Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold! 115  
 Of other care they little reckoning make,  
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,  
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest.  
 Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to  
 hold  
 A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least 120  
 That to the falterful herdman's art belongs!  
 What recks it them? What need they? They are sped.  
 And when they list, their lean and flashy songs  
 Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw  
 The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed 125  
 But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw,  
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread  
 Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw  
 Daily devours apace, and nothing said  
 But that two-handed engine at the door, 130  
 Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.'  
 Return, ~~Alpheus~~, the dread voice is past,  
 That shrunk thy streams, return, Sicilian Muse,  
 And call the vales, and bid them hither cast  
 Their bells, and flowerets of a thousand hues. 135  
 Ye valleys low where the mild whispers use,  
 Of shades and wanton winds, and gushing brooks  
 On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,  
 Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,  
 That on the green turf suck the honied showers, 140  
 And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.  
 Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,

---

107. **pledge**: i.e. child (Latin use). 122 **recks it them**: do they care. 123 **list**: wish. 124 **scrannel**: thin, meagre 138. **swart**: i.e. burning (making swarthy). 139. **quaint enamelled eyes**: dainty bright-coloured flowers 142. **rathe**: early -

The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,  
 The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,  
 The glowing violet, 145  
 The musk-rose, and the well attired woodbine,  
 With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,  
 And every flower that sad embroidery wears:  
 Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
 And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150  
 To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.  
 For so to interpose a little ease,  
 Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.  
 Ah me! Whilst thee the shores, and sounding seas  
 Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled, 155  
 Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,  
 Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide  
 Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;  
 Or whether thou to our moist vows denied,  
 Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old, 160  
 Where the great vision of the guarded mount  
 Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold;  
 Look homeward, angel, now, and melt with ruth;  
 And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth!  
 Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more, 165  
 For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,  
 Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;  
 So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
 And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
 And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore, 170  
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:  
 So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,  
 Through the dear might of him that walked the waves  
 Where, other groves and other streams along,  
 With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves, 175  
 And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,  
 In the blest Kingdoms meek of joy and love.  
 There entertain him all the saints above,

148. **sad embroidery** : sober colours 150. **daffadillies** : daffodils.  
 151. **laureate hearse** : poet's bier. 158. **monstrous world** : ocean,  
 full of monsters. 159. **moist vows** : tearful prayers. 170. **tricks** :  
 adorns ore : golden rays. 175. **nectar** : water of the gods. **oozy** :  
 covered with soft mud 176. **unexpressive** : inexpressible.

In solemn troops, and sweet societies  
That sing, and singing in their glory move, 180  
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.

Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more ;  
Henceforth thou art, the genius of the shore,  
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good  
To all that wander in that perilous flood. 185

Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,  
While the still morn went out with sandals grey ;  
He touched the tender stops of various quills,  
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay :  
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills, 190  
And now was dropt into the Western bay ;  
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue :  
Tomorrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

### *The Garden of Eden*

FROM 'PARADISE LOST'

So on he fares, and to the border comes  
Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,  
Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,  
As with a rural mound, the champaign head  
Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides  
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,  
Access denied ; and overhead up-grew  
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,  
Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,  
A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend 10  
Shade above shade, a woody theatre  
Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops  
The verdurous wall of Paradise up-sprung ;  
Which to our general sire gave prospect large  
Into his nether empire neighbouring round. 15  
And higher than that wall a circling row  
Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,

---

183. *genius* : guardian spirit. 186 *uncouth* : unknown 188  
*quills* : shepherd's reed pipes. 189 *Doric* : pastoral 4. *champaign*  
*head* : the level country at the head. 14. *our general sire* : univer-  
sal father of us all.

Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,  
 Appeared, with gay enamelled colours mixed ;  
 On which the sun more glad impressed his beams 20  
 Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,  
 When God hath showered the earth: so lovely seemed  
 That landscape ; and of pure now purer air  
 Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires  
 Vernal delight and joy, able to drive 25  
 All sadness but despair. Now gentle gales,  
 Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense  
 Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole  
 Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail  
 Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past 30  
 Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow  
 Sabeian odours from the spicy shore  
 Of Araby the Blest; with such delay  
 Well pleased they slack their course; and many a league  
 Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles ; 35  
 So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend  
 Who came their bane, though with them better pleased  
 Than Asmodeus with the fishy fume  
 That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse  
 Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent 40  
 From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.  
 Now to th' ascent of that steep savage hill  
 Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow ;  
 But further way found none ; so thick entwined,  
 As one continued brake, the undergrowth 45  
 Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed  
 All path of man or beast that passed that way.  
 One gate there only was, and that looked east  
 On th' other side: which when th' Arch-felon saw,  
 Due entrance he disdained, and, in contempt, 50  
 At one slight bound high overleaped all bound  
 Of hill or highest wall, and sheer within  
 Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,  
 Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,  
 Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve, 55  
 In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,

---

23. of pure . . . purer ; ever purer and purer 25 vernal: such  
 as spring brings 40 with a vengeance : with full retribution.



Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold.,  
 Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash  
 Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,  
 Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault, 60  
 In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles ;  
 So clomb this first grand Thief into God's fold :  
 So since into his Church lewd hirelings climb.  
 Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life, &  
 The middle tree and highest there that grew, 65  
 Sat like a cormorant ; yet not true life  
 Thereby regained, but sat devising death  
 To them who lived ; nor on the virtue thought  
 Of that life-giving plant, but only used  
 For prospect what, well used, had been the pledge 70  
 Of immortality. So little knows  
 Any, but God alone, to value right  
 The good before him, but perverts best things  
 To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.  
 Beneath him, with new wonder, now he views, 75  
 To all delight of human sense exposed,  
 In narrow room Nature's whole wealth ; yea,  
 more!—

A Heaven on Earth ; for blissful Paradise  
 Of God the garden was, by him, in the east  
 Of Eden planted ; Eden stretched her line 80  
 From Auran eastward to the royal towers  
 Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,  
 Or where the sons of Eden long before  
 Dwelt in Telassar. In this pleasant soil  
 His far more pleasant garden God ordained. 85  
 Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow  
 All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste ;  
 And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,  
 High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit  
 Of vegetable gold ; and, next to life, 90  
 Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by—  
 Knowledge of good, 'bought dear by knowing ill.  
 Southward through Eden went 'a river large,  
 Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill

Passed underneath ingulfed; for God had thrown 95  
 That mountain, as his garden-mould, high raised  
 Upon the rapid current, which through veins  
 Of porous earth with kindly thirst updrawn,  
 Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill  
 Watered the garden; thence united fell 100  
 Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,  
 Which from his darksome passage now appears,  
 And now, divided into four main streams,  
 Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm  
 Any country whereof here needs no account; 105  
 But rather to tell how, if Art could tell  
 How, from that sapphire fount the crisped brooks,  
 Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,  
 With mazy error under pendent shades  
 Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed 110  
 Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art  
 In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon  
 Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,  
 Both where the morning sun first warmly smote  
 The open field, and where the unpierc'd shade 115  
 Embrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place,  
 A happy rural seat of various view:  
 Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;  
 Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,  
 Hung amiable—Hesperian fables true, 120  
 If true, here only—and of delicious taste.  
 Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks  
 Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,  
 Or palmy hillock; or the flowery lap  
 Of some irriguous valley spread her store, 125  
 Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.  
 Another side, umbrageous grots and caves  
 Of cool recess, o'er which the mantling vine  
 Lays forth her purple grape, and gently creeps  
 Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall 130  
 Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,

---

98 kindly : natural 107 crisped, : rippling (lit. curled). 108.  
 orient : bright 109. error : wandering (Latin sense) 112 curious :  
 made with great skill and care boon : bounteous 125. irriguous :  
 well-watered 131 slope : sloping



That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned  
 Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams  
 The birds their quire apply ; airs, vernal airs,  
 Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune 135  
 The trembling leaves, while universal Pan,  
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,  
 Led on th' eternal Spring. Not that fair field  
 Of Enna, where Proserpin gathering flowers,  
 Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis 140  
 Was gathered—which cost Ceres all that pain  
 To seek her through the world—nor that sweet  
 grove

Of Daphne, by Orontes and th' inspired  
 Castalian spring, might with this Paradise  
 Of Eden strive ; nor that Nyseian isle, 145  
 Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,  
 Whom Gentiles Ammon call, and Libyan Jove,  
 Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,  
 Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye ;  
 Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard, 150  
 Mount Amara (though this by some supposed  
 True Paradise) under the Ethiop line  
 By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,  
 A whole day's journey high, but wide remote  
 From this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend 155  
 Saw undelighted all delight, all kind  
 Of living creatures, new to sight and strange,  
 Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,  
 God-like erect, with native honour clad  
 In naked majesty, seemed lords of all, 160  
 And worthy seemed ; for in their looks divine  
 The image of their glorious Maker shone,  
 Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure—  
 Severe, but in the true filial freedom placed ;  
 Whence true authority in men : though both 165  
 Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed ;  
 For contemplation he and valour formed,  
 For softness she and sweet attractive grace ;  
 He for God only, she for God in him.

134. **their quire apply** : sing together 135 **attune** : make tuneful.  
 137: **Hours** : the seasons (Latin sense) 150 **Abassin** : Abyssinian.

His fair large front and eye sublime declared 170  
 Absolute rule ; and hyacinthine locks  
 Round from his parted forelock manly hung  
 Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad ;  
 She, as a veil down to the slender waist,  
 Her unadorned golden tresses wore 175  
 Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved,  
 As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied  
 Subjection, but required with gentle sway,  
 And by her yielded, by him best received  
 Yielded, with coy submission, modest pride 180  
 And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.

*Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from  
Ireland*

THE forward youth that would appear  
 Must now forsake his Muses dear,  
 Nor in the shadows sing  
 His numbers languishing  
 'Tis time to leave the books in dust, 5  
 And oil the unused armour's rust  
 Removing from the wall  
 The corslet of the hall.  
 So restless Cromwell could not cease  
 In the inglorious arts of peace, 10  
 But through adventurous war  
 Urgéd his active star.  
 And, like the three-forked lightning, first  
 Breaking the clouds where it was nurst,  
 Did thorough his own side 15  
 His fiery way divide

---

171. hyacinthine : dark and curly, like the Greek flower (See note on *Lycidas*, 106.) 176. wanton; unrestrained 181. reluctant : struggling, resisting (Latin sense) 1 Forward : ready, eager. 4 numbers verses 9. cease : bring his career to an end. 15 thorough : through.

For 'tis all one to courage high  
 The emulous or enemy ;  
     And with such to enclose  
     Is more than to oppose. 20

Then burning through the air he went,  
 And palaces and temples rent:  
     And Caesar's head at last  
     Did through his laurels blast.

'Tis madness to resist or blame 25  
 The face of angry heaven's flame:  
     And, if we would speak true,  
     Much to the man is due,

Who, from his private gardens where  
 He lived reservéd and austere. 30  
     As if his highest plot  
     To plant the bergamot,

Could by industrious valour climb  
 To ruin the great work of Time.  
     And cast the kingdom old 35  
     Into another mould ;

Though Justice against Fate complain,  
 And plead the ancient rights in vain—  
     But those do hold or break  
     As men are strong or weak. 40

Nature, that hateth emptiness,  
 Allows of penetration less  
     And therefore must make room  
     Where greater spirits come.

What field of all the Civil Wars 45  
 Where his were not the deepest scars?  
     And Hampton shows what part  
     He had of wiser art,

Where, twining subtle fears with hope,  
 He wove a net of such a scope, 50  
     That Charles himself might chase  
     To Carisbrook's narrow case.

That thence the Royal actor borne  
 The tragic scaffold might adorn:  
     While round the armed bands 55  
     Did clap their bloody hands.

He nothing common did or mean  
 Upon that memorable scene:  
     But with his keener eye  
     The axe's edge did try 60

Nor called the gods with vulgar spite  
 To vindicate his helpless right,  
     But bowed his comely head,  
     Down as upon a bed.

This was that memorable hour 65  
 Which first assured the forced power.  
     So when they did design  
     The Capitol's first line,

A Bleeding Head where they begun,  
 Did fright the architects to run : 70  
     And yet in that the State  
     Foresaw its happy fate.

And now the Irish are ashamed  
 To see themselves in one year tamed:  
     So much one man can do, 75  
     That does both act and know.

They can affirm his praises best,  
 And have, though overcome, confest  
     How good he is, how just,  
     And fit for highest trust: 80

Not yet grown stiffer with command,  
 But still in the Republic's hand:  
     How fit he is to sway  
     That can so well obey.

He to the Commons' feet presents .85  
 A Kingdom for his first year's rents ;  
     And, what he may, forbears  
     His fame to make : it theirs:

And has his sword and spoils ungirt,  
 To lay them at the public's skirt. 90  
     So when the falcon high  
     Falls heavy from the sky,

She, having killed, no more does search,  
 But on the next green bough to perch ;  
     Where, when he first does lure, 95  
     The falconer has her sure.

What may not then our Isle presume  
 While victory his crest does plume!  
     What may not others fear  
     If thus he crowns each year! 100

A Caesar he ere long to Gaul,  
 To Italy an Hannibal,  
     And to all states not free  
     Shall climacteric be.

The Pict no shelter now shall find 105  
 Within his parti-coloured mind ;  
     But from this valour sad  
     Shrink underneath the plaid:

Happy if in the tufted brake  
 The English hunter him mistake ; 110  
     Nor lay his hounds in near  
     The Caledonian deer.

But thou, the war's and fortune's son,  
 March indefatigably on ;  
     And for the last effect 115  
     Still keep the sword erect:

---

104. *climacteric* : critical, dangerous. 105. *The Pict* : the Scot.  
 109. *brake* : bracken 110 *mistake* : fail to recognize. 112. *Caledonian* : Scottish.

Besides the force it has to fright  
 The spirits of the shady night,  
 The same arts that did gain  
 A power must it maintain.

120

### *Mac Flecknoe*

ALL human things are subject to decay,  
 And when Fate summons, Monarchs must obey.  
 This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young  
 Was called to empire, and had governed long ;  
 In prose and verse was owned, without dispute, 5  
 Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute.  
 This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,  
 And blessed with issue of a large increase,  
 Worn out with business, did at length debate  
 To settle the succession of the state: 10  
 And pond'ring which of all his sons was fit  
 To reign and wage immortal war with wit,  
 Cried, ' 'Tis resolved, for Nature pleads that he  
 Should only rule who most resembles me.  
 Shadwell alone my perfect image bears, 15  
 Mature in dulness from his tender years:  
 Shadwell alone of all my sons is he  
 Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.  
 The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,  
 But Shadwell never deviates into sense. 20  
 Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,  
 Strike through and make a lucid interval ;  
 But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,  
 His rising fogs prevail upon the day.  
 Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye, 25  
 And seems designed for thoughtless majesty :  
 Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,  
 And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.  
 Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,

Thou last great prophet of tautology. . . . 30  
 Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,  
 Was sent before but to prepare thy way ;  
 And coarsely clad in Norwich drugget came  
 To teach the nations in thy greater name.  
 My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung 35  
 When to King John of Portugal I sung,  
 Was but the prelude to that glorious day,  
 When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,  
 With well-timed oars before the royal barge,  
 Swelled with the pride of thy celestial charge, 40  
 And, big with hymn, commander of an host ;  
 The like was ne'er in Epsom blankets toss'd  
 Methinks I see the new Arion sail,  
 The lute still trembling underneath thy nail  
 At thy well-sharpened thumb from shore to shore 45  
 The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar ,  
 About thy boat the little fishes throng,  
 As at the morning toast that floats along  
 Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious band,  
 Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand 50  
 St André's feet ne'er kept more equal time,  
 Not ev'n the feet of thy own *Psyche's* rhyme ,  
 Though they in number as in sense excel  
 So just, so like tautology, they fell,  
 That, pale with envy, Singleton forswore 55  
 The lute and sword which he in triumph bore  
 And vowed he ne'er would act Villerius more  
 Here stopped the good old sire and wept for joy,  
 In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.  
 All arguments, but most his plays, persuade 60  
 That for anointed dulness he was made.  
 Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind  
 (The fair Augusta much to fears inclined)  
 And ancient fabric raised to inform the sight  
 There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight , 65  
 A watchtower once, but now, so Fate ordains,  
 Of all the pile an empty name remains.  
 From its old ruins brothel-houses rise,

33. **drugget** : coarse woollen material for clothes 35 **whilom** :  
 formerly 62. **Augusta** : London 65 **hight** : was called

Scenes of lewd loves and of polluted joys,  
 Where their vast courts the mother-strumpets keep, 70  
 And, undisturbed by watch, in silence sleep.  
 Near these a nursery erects its head,  
 Where queens are formed and future heroes bred,  
 Where unfledged actors learn to laugh and cry,  
 Where infant punks their tender voices try, 75  
 And little Maximins the gods defy.  
 Great Fletcher never treads in buskins here,  
 Nor greater Jonson dares in socks appear ;  
 But gentle Simkin just reception finds  
 Amidst this monument of vanished minds ; 80  
 Pure clinches the suburban muse affords,  
 And Panton waging harmless war with words.  
 Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well known,  
 Ambitiously designed his Shadwell's throne.  
 For ancient Dekker prophesied long since 85  
 That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,  
 Born for a scourge of wit and flail of sense,  
 To whom true dulness should some *Psyches* owe,  
 But worlds of *Misers* from his pen should flow ;  
*Humorists* and *Hypocrites* it should produce, 90  
 Whole Raymond families and tribes of Bruce.  
 Now empress Fame had published the renown  
 Of Shadwell's coronation through the town.  
 Roused by report of Fame, the nations meet  
 From near Bunhill and distant Watling street. 95  
 No Persian carpets spread th' imperial way,  
 But scattered limbs of mangled poets lay:  
 Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby there lay,  
 But loads of Shadwell almost choked the way.  
 Bilked stationers for yeomen stood prepared, 100  
 And Herringman was captain of the guard.  
 The hoary prince in majesty appeared  
 High on a throne of his own labours reared.  
 At his right hand our young Ascanius sat,  
 Rome's other hope,\* and pillar of the state. 105  
 His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,  
 And lambent dulness played\* around his face.

72. nursery : school for training actors. 75. punks : prostitutes.  
 81. clinches : puns. 82. Panton : a noted punster.



As Hannibal did to the altars come,  
 Swore by his sire a mortal foe to Rome ;  
 So Shadwell swore, nor should his vow be vain, 110  
 That he till death true dulness would maintain,  
 And, in his father's right, and realm's defence,  
 Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.  
 The king himself the sacred unction made,  
 As king by office and as priest by trade. 115  
 In his sinister hand, instead of ball,  
 He plac'd a mighty m<sup>g</sup> of potent ale ;  
*Love's Kingdom* to his right he did convey,  
 At once his sceptre, and his rule of sway ;  
 Whose righteous lore the prince had practised  
     young, 120  
 And from whose joins recorded *Psyche* sprung.  
 His temples, last, with poppies were o'erspread,  
 That nodding seemed to consecrate his head.  
 Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,  
 On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly. 125  
 So Romulus, 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook,  
 Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.  
 Th' admiring throng loud acclamations make,  
 And omens of his future empire take.  
 The sire then shook the honours of his head, 130  
 And from his brows damps of oblivion shed  
 Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,  
 Repelling from his breast the raging god ;  
 At length burst out in this prophetic mood:  
 'Heavens bless my son! from Ireland let him reign 135  
 To far Barbadoes on the western main ;  
 Of his dominion may no end be known,  
 And greater than his father's be his throne ;  
 Beyond *Love's Kingdom* let him stretch his pen!'  
 He paused, and all the people cried 'Amen'. 140  
 Then thus continued he: 'My son, advance  
 Still in new impudence, new ignorance.  
 Success let others teach, learn thou from me  
 Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.  
 Let *virtuosos* in five years be writ, 145

109 Swore : sworn 114. unction : oil. 116. sinister : left. 130  
 the honours of, his head : his venerable head of white hair.

Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.  
 Let gentle George in triumph tread the stage,  
 Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage ;  
 Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling, charm the pit,  
 And in their folly show the writer's wit. 150  
 Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defence,  
 And justify their author's want of sense.  
 Let 'em be all by thy own model made  
 Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid ;  
 That they to future ages may be known, 155  
 Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own.  
 Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same.  
 Ail full of thee and differing but in name.  
 But let no alien Sedley interpose  
 To lard with wit thy hungry Epsom prose. 160  
 And when false flowers of rhetoric thou wouldst cull,  
 Trust nature, do not labour to be dull ;  
 But write thy best and top ; and in each line  
 Sir Formal's oratory will be thine.  
 Sir Formal, though unsought, attends thy quill, 165  
 And does thy northern dedications fill.  
 Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame  
 By arrogating Jonson's hostile name ;  
 Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise  
 And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise. 170  
 Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part :  
 What share have we in nature or in art?  
 Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,  
 And rail at arts he did not understand?  
 Where made he love in Prince Nicander's vein, 175  
 Or swept the dust in Psyche's humble strain?  
 When did his Muse from Fletcher scenes purloin,  
 As thou whole Etheridge dost transfuse to thine?  
 But so transfused, as oils on waters flow ;  
 His always floats above, thine sinks below. 180  
 This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,  
 New humours to invent for each new play:  
 This is that boasted bias of thy mind,  
 By which one way to dulness 'tis inclined,  
 Which makes thy writings lean on one side still, 185  
 And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.

Nor let thy mountain belly make pretence  
 Of likeness ; thine's a tympany of sense.  
 A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,  
 But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin of wit. 190  
 Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep ;  
 Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep.  
 With whate'er gall thou sett'st thyself to write,  
 Thy inoffensive satires never bite ;  
 In thy felonious heart though venom lies, 195  
 It does but touch thy parish pen, and dies.  
 Thy genius calls thee not not to purchase fame  
 In keen iambics, but mild anagram.  
 Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command  
 Some peaceful province in Acrostic land. 200  
 There thou may'st wings display and altars raise,  
 And torture one poor word ten thousand ways ;  
 Or, if thou would'st thy different talents suit,  
 Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute.'  
 He said, but his last words were scarcely heard, 205  
 For Bruce and Longville had a trap prepared,  
 And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.  
 Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,  
 Born upwards by a subterranean wind.  
 The mantle fell to the young prophet's part 210  
 With double portion of his father's art.

187. pretence : claim. 189. tun : very large cask. 190. kilderkin barrel,  $\frac{1}{15}$ th of a tun in capacity.

*The Rape of the Lock*

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos ;

Sed juvat hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.—MARTIAL.

## CANTO I

WHAT dire offence from amorous causes springs,  
 What mighty contests rise from trivial things,  
 I sing—This verse to Caryl, Muse! is due:  
 This, even Belinda may vouchsafe to view:  
 Slight is the subject, but not so the praise, 5  
 If she inspire, and he approve, my lays.

Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel  
 A well-bred lord to assault a gentle belle?  
 O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,  
 Could make a gentle belle reject a lord? 10  
 In tasks so bold, can little men engage,  
 And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?

Sol through white curtains shot a timorous ray,  
 And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day:  
 Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake, 15  
 And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:  
 Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knocked the ground,  
 And the press'd watch returned a silver sound.

Belinda still her downy pillow pressed,  
 Her guardian sylph prolonged the balmy rest: 20  
 'Twas he had summoned to her silent bed  
 The morning-dream that hovered o'er her head;  
 A youth more glittering than a birth-night beau,  
 (That even in slumber caused her cheek to glow)  
 Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay, 25  
 And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say.

' Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished care  
 Of thousand bright inhabitants of air!  
 It e'er one vision touched thy infant thought,  
 Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught ; 30  
 Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,  
 The silver token, and the circled green,  
 Or virgins visited by angel-powers,

13 Sol : the sun (Latin). 32. circled green : discoloured circle  
 on grass, made by fairies' dancing.

With golden crowns and wreaths of heavenly flowers ;  
 Hear and believe ! thy own importance know, 35  
 Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.  
 Some secret truths, from learned pride concealed,  
 To maids alone and children are revealed :  
 What though no credit doubting wits may give !  
 The fair and innocent shall still believe. 40  
 Know, then, unnumbered spirits round thee fly,  
 The light militia of the lower sky :  
 These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,  
 Hang o'er the box, and hover round the ring.  
 Think what an equipage thou hast in air, 45  
 And view with scorn two pages and a chair.  
 As now your own, our beings were of old,  
 And once inclosed in woman's beauteous mould :  
 Thence, by a soft transition, we repair  
 From earthly vehicles to these of air. 50  
 Think not, when woman's transient breath is fled,  
 That all her vanities at once are dead :  
 Succeeding vanities she still regards,  
 And though she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.  
 Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive, 55  
 And love of ombre, after death survive.  
 For when the fair in all their pride expire,  
 To their first elements their souls retire :  
 The sprites of fiery termagants in flame  
 Mount up, and take a salamander's name. 60  
 Soft yielding minds to water glide away,  
 And sip, with nymphs, their elemental tea.  
 The graver prude sinks downward to a gnome,  
 In search of mischief still on earth to roam.  
 The light coquettes in sylphs aloft repair, 65  
 And sport and flutter in the fields of air.  
 ' Know further yet ; whoever fair and chaste  
 Rejects mankind, is by some sylph embraced :  
 For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease  
 Assume what sexes and what shapes they please. 70  
 What guards the purity of melting maids,

---

44. **box** : theatre box. **ring** : enclosure at the races. 56. **ombre** : card game (see 315-90). 60. **salamander** : spirit inhabiting fire.  
 62. **nymphs** : 'spirits inhabiting water.

In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,  
 Safe from the treacherous friend, the daring spark,  
 The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,  
 When kind occasion prompts their warm desires, 75  
 When music softens, and when dancing fires?  
 'Tis but their sylph, the wise celestials know,  
 Though honour is the word with men below.

Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their  
 face,

For life predestined to the gnomes' embrace. 80  
 These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,  
 When offers are disdained, and love denied:  
 Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,  
 While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,  
 And garters, stars, and coronets appear, 85  
 And in soft sounds, "Your Grace" salutes their ear.  
 'Tis these that early taint the female soul,  
 Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,  
 Teach infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,  
 And little hearts to flutter at a beau. 90

Oh, when the world imagine women stray,  
 The sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way,  
 Through all the giddy circle they pursue,  
 And old impertinence expel by new.

What tender maid but must a victim fall 95  
 To one man's treat, but for another's ball?  
 When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,  
 If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?  
 With varying vanities, from every part,  
 They shift the moving toyshop of their heart; 100  
 Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-  
 knots strive,

Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.  
 This erring mortals levity may call;  
 Oh blind to truth! the sylphs contrive it all.

'Of these am I, who thy protection claim, 105

73. **spark** : gay, fashionable youth. 79. **nymphs** : maidens. 85. **garters** : badges of highest order of knighthood. **stars** : symbols of knighthood. 86. "Your Grace" : address to Duke or Duchess. 96. **treat** : entertainment. 101. **sword-knots** : tassel tied to hilt of sword.

A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.  
 Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,  
 In the clear mirror of thy ruling star  
 I saw, alas! some dread event impend,  
 Ere to the main this morning sun descend, 110  
 But heaven reveals not what, or how, or where:  
 Warned by the sylph, oh pious maid, beware!  
 This to disclose is all thy guardian can:  
 Beware of all, but most beware of man!

He said; when Shock, who thought she slept  
 too long, 115  
 Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.  
 'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,  
 Thy eyes first opened on a billet-doux;  
 Wounds, charms, and ardours were no sooner read,  
 But all the vision vanished from thy head. 120

And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed.  
 Each silver vase in mystic order laid.  
 First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,  
 With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.  
 A heavenly image in the glass appears, 125  
 To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;  
 The inferior priestess, at her altar's side,  
 Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.  
 Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here  
 The various offerings of the world appear; 130  
 From each she nicely culls with curious toil,  
 And decks the Goddess with the glittering spoil.  
 This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,  
 And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.  
 The tortoise here and elephant unite, 135  
 Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.  
 Here files of pins extend their shining rows,  
 Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.  
 Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;  
 The fair each moment rises in her charms, 140  
 Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,  
 And calls forth all the wonders of her face;

---

115. Shock: dog's name 118. billet-doux: love letter. 124 cosmetic powers: paint pots. 127. inferior priestess: B.'s lady's maid, 'Betty' (148) 135. tortoise: tortoise-shell. elephant: ivory.



Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,  
 And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.  
 The busy sylphs surround their darling care, 145  
 These set the head, and those divide the hair,  
 Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown ;  
 And Betty's praised for labours not her own.

## CANTO II

Not with more glories, in the ethereal plain,  
 The sun first rises o'er the purpled main, 150  
 Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams  
 Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.  
 Fair nymphs, and well-dressed youths around her  
 shone,  
 But every eye was fixed on her alone.  
 On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore, 155  
 Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.  
 Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,  
 Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those:  
 Favours to none, to all she smiles extends ;  
 Oft she rejects, but never once offends. 160  
 Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,  
 And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.  
 Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,  
 Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:  
 If to her share some female errors fall, 165  
 Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.  
 This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,  
 Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind  
 In equal curls, and well conspired to deck  
 With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck. 170  
 Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,  
 And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.  
 With hairy springes we the birds betray,  
 Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,  
 Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare, 175  
 And beauty draws us with a single hair.  
 The adventurous Baron the bright locks admired ;  
 He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired.



Resolved to win, he meditates the way,  
 By force to ravish, or by fraud betray ; 180  
 For when success a lover's toil attends,  
 Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends.

For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implored  
 Propitious heaven, and every power adored,  
 But chiefly Love—to Love an altar built, 185  
 Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.  
 There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves ;  
 And all the trophies of his former loves ;  
 With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,  
 And breathes three amorous sighs to raise the fire. 190  
 Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes  
 Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:  
 The powers gave ear, and granted half his prayer,  
 The rest the winds dispersed in empty air.

But now secure the painted vessel glides, 195  
 The sun-beams trembling on the floating tides:  
 While melting music steals upon the sky,  
 And softened sounds along the waters die ;  
 Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,  
 Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay. 200  
 All but the sylph—with careful thoughts oppressed,  
 The impending woe sat heavy on his breast.  
 He summons straight his denizens of air ;  
 The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:  
 Soft o'er the shrouds aerial whispers breathe, 205  
 That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath.  
 Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,  
 Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold ;  
 Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,  
 Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light, 210  
 Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,  
 Thin glittering textures of the filmy dew,  
 Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,  
 Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,  
 While every beam new transient colours flings, 215  
 Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.  
 Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,

Superior by the head, was Ariel placed ;  
 His purple pinions opening to the sun,  
 He raised his azure wand, and thus began. 220  
 'Ye sylphs and sylphids, to your chief give ear!  
 Fays, fairies, genii, elves, and demons, hear!  
 Ye know the spheres and various tasks assigned  
 By laws eternal to the aerial kind. •  
 Some in the fields of purest ether play, 225  
 And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.  
 Some guide the course of wandering orbs on high,  
 Or roll the planets through the boundless sky.  
 Some less refined, beneath the moon's pale light  
 Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night, 230  
 Or suck the mists in grosser air below,  
 Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,  
 Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,  
 Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.  
 Others on earth o'er human race preside, 235  
 Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:  
 Of these the chief the care of nations own,  
 And guard with arms divine the British throne.  
 'Our humbler province is to tend the fair,  
 Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care ; 240  
 To save the powder from too rude a gale,  
 Nor let the imprisoned essences exhale ;  
 To draw fresh colours from the vernal flowers ;  
 To steal from rainbows ere they drop in showers  
 A brighter wash ; to curl their waving hairs, 245  
 Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs ;  
 Nay oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,  
 To change a flounce, or add a furbelow.  
 ' This day, black omens threat the brightest fair,  
 That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care ; 250  
 Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight ;  
 But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night.  
 Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,  
 Or some frail china jar receive a flaw ;  
 Or stain her honour or her new brocade ; 255

221 sylphids : young sylphs      227. wandering orbs : meteors.  
 245 wash : cosmetic lotion.      251 slight : trick (sleight).      253.  
 Diana's law : law of chastity

'Forget her prayers, or miss a masquerade ;  
 Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball ;  
 Or whether Heaven has doomed that Shock must fall.  
 Haste, then, ye spirits! to your charge repair:  
 The fluttering fan be Zephyretta's care: 260  
 The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign ;  
 And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine ;  
 Do thou, Crispissa, tend her favourite lock ;  
 Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.  
 'To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note, 265  
 We trust th' important charge, the petticoat:  
 Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail, "  
 Though stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of  
 whale ;  
 Form a strong line about the silver bound,  
 And guard the wide circumference around. 270  
 'Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,  
 His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,  
 Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,  
 Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins ;  
 Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie, 275  
 Or wedged whole ages in a bodkin's eye:  
 Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,  
 While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain ;  
 Or alum styptics with contracting power  
 Shrink his thin essence like a rivelled flower: 280  
 Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel  
 The giddy motion of the whirling mill,  
 In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow,  
 And tremble at the sea that froths below!'  
 He spoke ; the spirits from the sails descend ; 285  
 Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend ;  
 Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair ;  
 Some hang upon the pendants of her ear:  
 With beating hearts the dire event they wait,  
 Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate. 290

261. **drops** : pendant ornaments. 274. **stopped** : shut up with stoppers. 279. **alum styptics** : pieces of alum used to stop bleeding. 287. **thrid** : thread.

## CANTO III

Close by those meads, for ever crowned with flowers,  
 Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers,  
 There stands a structure of majestic frame,  
 Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.  
 Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall, foredoom 295  
 Of foreign tyrants and of nymphs at home ;  
 Here thou, great Anna! whom three realms obey,  
 Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes tea.

Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,  
 To taste awhile the pleasures of a court ; 300  
 In various talk the instructive hours they passed,  
 Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last ;  
 One speaks the glory of the British queen,  
 And one describes a charming Indian screen ;  
 A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes ; 305  
 At every word a reputation dies.  
 Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,  
 With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,  
 The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray ; 310  
 The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,  
 And wretches hang that jury-men may dine ;  
 The merchant from the Exchange returns in peace,  
 And the long labours of the toilet cease.

Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites, 315  
 Burns to encounter two adventurous knights,  
 At ombre singly to decide their doom ;

And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.  
 Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,  
 Each band the number of the sacred nine. 320

Soon as she spreads her hand, the aerial guard  
 Descend, and sit on each important card:  
 First Ariel perched upon a Matadore,  
 Then each, according to the rank they bore ;  
 For sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race, 325  
 Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.

Behold, four kings in majesty revered,  
 With hoary whiskers and a forked beard ;

---

323. *Matadore* : any of the three highest cards in ombre.

And four fair queens whose hands sustain a flower,  
 The expressive emblem of their softer power ; . . . 330  
 Four knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band,  
 Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand ;  
 And parti-coloured troops, a shining train,  
 Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.

The skilful nymph reviews her force with care : 335  
 Let spades be trumps ! she said, and trumps they were.

Now move to war her sable Matadores,  
 In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.  
 Spadillio first, unconquerable lord !  
 Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board. 340

As many more Manillio forced to yield,  
 And marched a victor from the verdant field.  
 Him Basto followed, but his fate more hard  
 Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.  
 With his broad sabre next, a chief in years, 345

The hoary majesty of spades appears,  
 Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revealed,  
 The rest, his many-coloured robe concealed  
 The rebel knave, who dares his prince engage,  
 Proves the just victim of his royal rage. 350

Even mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew,  
 And moved down armies in the fights of Lu,  
 Sad chance of war ! now destitute of aid,  
 Falls undistinguished by the victor spade !

Thus far both armies to Belinda yield ; 355  
 Now to the Baron fate inclines the field.

His wailike Amazon her host invades,  
 The imperial consort of the crown of spades.  
 The club's black tyrant first her victim died,  
 Spite of his haughty mien, and barbarous pride : 360

What boots the regal circle on his head,  
 His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread ;  
 That long behind he trails his pompous robe,  
 And, of all monarchs, only grasps the globe ?

The Baron now his diamonds pouts apace ; 365

331. *succinct* : tucked up under a girdle. 339 *Spadillio* : ace of spades (*Spadille*). 341 *Manillio* : 2 of spades (*Manille*). 343. *Basto* : ace of clubs 351 *Pam* : Knave of clubs, the highest card in loo. 352 *Lu* : loo.

The embroidered king who shows but half his  
face,

And his refulgent queen, with powers combined,  
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.  
Clubs, diamonds, hearts, in wild disorder seen,  
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green. 370  
Thus when dispersed a routed army runs,  
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,  
With like confusion different nations fly,  
Of various habit, and of various dye,  
The pierced battalions disunited fall, 375  
In heaps on heaps ; one fate o'erwhelms them all.

The knave of diamonds tries his wily arts,  
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the queen of hearts.  
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,  
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look ; 380  
She sees, and trembles at the approaching ill.  
Just in the jaws of ruin, and codille.  
And now (as oft in some distempered state)  
On one nice trick depends the general fate:  
An ace of hearts steps forth: the king unseen 385  
Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive queen:  
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,  
And falls like thunder on the prostrate ace.  
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky  
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply. 390

O thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,  
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.  
Sudden, these honours shall be snatched away  
And cursed for ever this victorious day.

For lo! the board with cups and spoons is  
crowned, 395  
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round  
On shining altars of Japan they raise  
The silver lamp ; the fiery spirits blaze:  
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,  
While China's earth receives the smoking tide: 400  
At once they gratify their scent and taste,

382. *codille* : defeat of the challenger in ombre. 397. *altars of Japan* : japanned stands. 400. *China's earth* : the china coffee cups. *smoking tide* : steaming coffee.



And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.  
 Straight hover round the fair her airy band ;  
 Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned,  
 Some o'er her lap their careful plumes displayed, 405,  
 Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.  
 Coffee, (which makes the politician wise,  
 And see through all things with his half-shut eyes)  
 Sent up in vapours to the Baron's brain  
 New stratagems, the radiant lock to gain. 410  
 Ah cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,  
 Fear the just gods, and think of Scylla's fate!  
 Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,  
 She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!  
 But when to mischief mortals bend their will, 415  
 How soon they find fit instruments of ill!  
 Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace  
 A two-edged weapon from her shining case:  
 So ladies in romance assist their knight,  
 Present the spear, and arm him for the fight 420  
 He takes the gift with reverence, and extends  
 The little engine on his fingers' ends ;  
 This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,  
 As o'er the fragrant streams she bends her head.  
 Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair, 425  
 A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair ;  
 And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear ;  
 Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near.  
 Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought  
 The close recesses of the virgin's thought ; 430  
 As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,  
 He watched the ideas rising in her mind,  
 Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,  
 An earthly lover lurking at her heart.  
 Amazed, confused, he found his power expired, 435  
 Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.  
 The peer now spreads the glittering forfex wide,  
 To inclose the lock ; 'now joins' it, to divide.  
 Even then, before the fatal engine closed,  
 A wretched sylph too fondly interposed ; 440

---

418. two-edged weapon : pair of scissors 437. forfex : scissors (Latin).

Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,  
 (But airy substance soon unites again)  
 The meeting points the sacred hair dis sever  
 From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!

Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes, 445  
 And screams of horror rend the affrighted skies.  
 Not louder shrieks to pitying heaven are cast,  
 When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their  
 last;

Or when rich China vessels fallen from high,  
 In glittering dust and painted fragments lie! 450

Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,  
 (The victor cried) the glorious prize is mine!  
 While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,  
 Or in a coach and six the British fair,  
 As long as Atalantis shall be read, 455  
 Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,  
 While visits shall be paid on solemn days,  
 When numerous wax-lights in bright order blaze,  
 While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,  
 So long my honour, name, and praise shall live! 460  
 What time would spare, from steel receives its date,  
 And monuments, like men, submit to fate!  
 Steel could the labour of the Gods destroy,  
 And strike to dust the imperial towers of Troy;  
 Steel could the works of mortal pride confound, 465  
 And hew triumphal arches to the ground.  
 What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should  
 feel

The conquering force of unresisted steel?

## CANTO IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppressed,  
 And secret passions laboured in her breast. 470  
 Not youthful kings in battle seized alive,  
 Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,  
 Not ardent lovers robbed of all their bliss,  
 Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,  
 Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die, 475



Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinned awry,  
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,  
As thou, sad virgin! for thy ravished hair.

For, that sad moment, when the sylphs withdrew  
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew, 480  
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,  
As ever sullied the fair face of light,  
Down to the central earth, his proper scene.  
Repaired to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen.

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the gnome, 485  
And in a vapour reached the dismal dome  
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows.  
The dreaded east is all the wind that blows.  
Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air,  
And screened in shades from day's detested glare. 490  
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,  
Pain at her side, and Megrin at her head.

Two handmaids wait the throne: alike in place,  
But differing far in figure and in face.  
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid, 495  
Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed.  
With store of prayers, for mornings, nights, and noons  
Her hand is filled, her bosom with lampoons.

There Affectation, with a sickly mien, ;  
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen, 500  
Practised to lisp, and hang the head aside,  
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride.  
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,  
Wrapt in a gown, for sickness, and for show.  
The fair ones feel such maladies as these, 505  
When each new night-dress gives a new disease

A constant vapour o'er the palace flies,  
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise;  
Dreadful, as hermit's dreams in haunted shades,  
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids. 510  
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,  
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires:  
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,  
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.

476 manteau : mantle    502. Faints into airs : follows up pretended swoon with further affectations.

Unnumbered throngs on every side are seen, 515  
 Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.  
 Here living tea-pots stand, one arm held out,  
 One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:  
 A pipkin there, like Homer's tripod, walks;  
 Here sighs a jar, and there a goose-pie talks; 520  
 Men prove with child, as powerful fancy works,  
 And maids turned bottles, call aloud for corks.

Safe passed the gnome through this fantastic band,  
 A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand.  
 Then thus address'd the power: 'Hail, wayward  
 Queen! 525

Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen:  
 Parent of vapours and of female wit,  
 Who give the hysteric, or poetic fit,  
 On various tempers act by various ways,  
 Make some take physic, others scribble plays, 530  
 Who cause the proud their visits to delay,  
 And send the godly in a pet to pray.  
 A nymph there is, that all thy power disdains,  
 And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.  
 But oh! if e'er thy gnome could spoil a grace. 535  
 Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,  
 Like citron-waters matrons' cheeks inflame,  
 Or change complexions at a losing game;  
 If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,  
 Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds, 540  
 Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,  
 Or discomposed the head-dress of a prude,  
 Or e'er to costive lap-dog gave disease,  
 Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease:  
 Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin, 545  
 That single act gives half the world the spleen.'

The Goddess with a discontented air  
 Seems to reject him, though she grants his prayer.  
 A wondrous bag with both her hands she binds,  
 Like that where once Ulysses held the winds; 550  
 There she collects the force of female lungs,

524. **spleenwort** : a kind of fern. 527 **vapours** : hysterical state of depression. 537. **citron-waters** : brandy with citron or lemon peel in it 539. **airy** : imaginary

Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.  
 A vial next she fills with fainting fears,  
 Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.  
 The gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away, 555  
 Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.

Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found,  
 Her eyes dejected and her hair unbound.  
 Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,  
 And all the Furies issued at the vent. 560

Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,  
 And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.  
 'O wretched maid!' she spread her hands, and cried,  
 (While Hampton's echoes, 'Wretched maid!' replied)  
 'Was it for this you took such constant care 565

The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?  
 For this your locks in paper durance bound,  
 For this with torturing irons wreathed around?  
 For this with fillets strained your tender head,  
 And bravely bore the double loads of lead? 570

Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,  
 While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!  
 Honour forbid! at whose unrivalled shrine  
 Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.  
 Methinks already I your tears survey, 575

Already hear the horrid things they say,  
 Already see you a degraded toast,  
 And all your honour in a whisper lost!  
 How shall I, then, your hapless fame defend?  
 'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend! 580

And shall this prize, the inestimable prize,  
 Exposed through crystal to the gazing eyes,  
 And heightened by the diamond's circling rays,  
 On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?  
 Sooner shall grass in Hyde-park Circus grow, 585

And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;  
 Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,  
 Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!  
 She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,  
 And bids her beau demand the precious hairs: 590  
 (Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,

And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)  
 With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,  
 He first the snuff-box opened, then the case,  
 And thus broke out—'My Lord, why, what the  
 devil? 595

Zounds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!  
 Plague on't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!  
 Give her the hair'—he spoke, and rapped his box.

'It grieves me much' (replied the Peer again)  
 'Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain. 600

But by this lock, this sacred lock I swear,  
 (Which never more shall join its parted hair;  
 Which never more its honours shall renew,  
 Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew)  
 That while my nostrils draw the vital air, 605  
 This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear.'

He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread  
 The long-contended honours of her head.

But Umbriel, hateful gnome! forbears not so;  
 He breaks the vial whence the sorrows flow. 610

Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,  
 Her eyes half-languishing, half-drowned in tears;  
 On her heaved bosom hung her drooping head,  
 Which, with a sigh, she raised; and thus she said.

'For ever curs'd be this detested day, 615

Which snatched my best, my favourite curl away!

Happy! ah ten times happy had I been,

If Hampton-Court these eyes had never seen!

Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,

By love of courts to numerous ills betrayed. 620

Oh had I rather un-admired remained

In some lone isle, or distant northern land;

Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,

Where none learn ombre, none e'er taste bohea!

There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye, 625

Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.

What moved my mind with youthful lords to roam?

Oh had I stayed, and said my prayers at home!

'Twas this, the morning omens seemed to tell,

Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell; 630

The tottering China shook without a wind,  
 Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!  
 A sylph too warned me of the threats of fate,  
 In mystic visions, now believed too late!  
 See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs! 635  
 My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares:  
 These in two 'sable ringlets taught to break,  
 Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;  
 The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,  
 And in its fellow's fate foresees its own; 640  
 Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands,  
 And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands.  
 Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize  
 Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!

## CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears, 645  
 But fate and Jove had stopped the Baron's ears.  
 In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,  
 For who can move when fair Belinda fails?  
 Not half so fixed the Trojan could remain,  
 While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain. 650  
 Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan;  
 Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began.

'Say, why are beauties praised and honoured  
 most,

The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?  
 Why decked with all that land and sea afford, 655  
 Why Angels called, and Angel-like adored?  
 Why round our coaches crowd the white-gloved  
 beaux,  
 Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows?  
 How vain are all these glories, all our pains,  
 Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains: 660  
 That men may say, when we the front-box grace:  
 "Behold the first in virtue as in face!"  
 Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,  
 Charmed the small-pox, or chased old-age away;  
 Who would not scorn what housewife's cares  
 produce, 665

Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?  
 To patch, nay ogle, might become a saint,  
 Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.  
 But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,  
 Curled or uncurled, since locks will turn to grey; 670  
 Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,  
 And she who scorns a man, must die a maid;  
 What then remains but well our power to use,  
 And keep good-humour still whate'er we lose?  
 And trust me, dear! good-humour can prevail, 675  
 When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.  
 Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;  
 Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.  
 So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued;  
 Belinda frowned, Thalestris call'd her prude. 680  
 'To arms, to arms!' the fierce virago cries,  
 And swift as lightning to the combat flies.  
 All side in parties, and begin the attack;  
 Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack;  
 Heroes' and heroines' shouts confus'dly rise, 685  
 And base and treble voices strike the skies.  
 No common weapons in their hands are found,  
 Like gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.  
 So when bold Homer makes the gods engage,  
 And heavenly breasts with human passions rage; 690  
 Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;  
 And all Olympus rings with loud alarms:  
 Jove's thunder roars, heaven trembles all around,  
 Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound:  
 Earth shakes her nodding towers, the ground gives  
 way, 695  
 And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!  
 Triumphant Umbriel on a scone's height  
 Clapped his glad wings, and sate to view the fight:  
 Propped on their bodkin spears, the sprites survey  
 The growing combat, or assist the fray. 700  
 While through the press enraged Thalestris flies,

676. **flights** : caprices 691 **Pallas** : Athene, goddess of wisdom.  
**Mars** : god of war **Latona** : mistress of Jove, by him mother of  
 Apollo and Diana. **Hermes** : Mercury, messenger of the gods. 694.  
**Neptune** : the sea (god of the sea).



And scatters death around from both her eyes,  
 A beau and witling perished in the throng,  
 One died in metaphor, and one in song.  
 'O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,' 705  
 Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.  
 A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,  
 'Those eyes are made so killing'—was his last.  
 Thus on Meander's flowery margin lies  
 The expiring swan, and as he sings he dies. 710  
 When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,  
 Chloe stepped in, and killed him with a frown;  
 She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,  
 But, at her smile, the beau revived again.  
 Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air, 715  
 Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;  
 The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;  
 At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.  
 See, fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,  
 With more than usual lightning in her eyes: 720  
 Nor feared the chief the unequal fight to try,  
 Who sought no more than on his foe to die.  
 But this bold lord with manly strength endued,  
 She with one finger and a thumb subdued:  
 Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew, 725  
 A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;  
 The gnomes direct, to every atom just,  
 The pungent grains of titillating dust.  
 Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,  
 And the high dome re-echoes to his nose. 730  
 'Now meet thy fate,' incensed Belinda cried,  
 And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.  
 (The same, his ancient personage to deck,  
 Her great great grandsire wore about his neck,  
 In three seal-rings; which after, melted down, 735  
 Formed a vast buckle for his widow's gown:  
 Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,  
 The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;  
 Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,  
 Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.) 740

---

703. **witling**: miserable little wit. 727. **to every atom just**: accurately, down to the last atom.

'Boast not my fall' (he cried) 'insulting foe!  
 Thou by some other shalt be laid as low,  
 Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind:  
 All that I dread is leaving you behind!  
 Rather than so, ah let me still survive, 745  
 And burn in Cupid's flames but burn alive.'

'Restore the lock!' she cries; and all around  
 'Restore the lock!' the vaulted roofs rebound.  
 Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain  
 Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain. 750  
 But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,  
 And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!  
 The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain.  
 In every place is sought, but sought in vain:  
 With such a prize no mortal must be blest, 755  
 So heaven decrees! with heaven who can contest?  
 Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere.  
 Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.  
 There heroes' wits are kept in ponderous vases,  
 And 'beaux' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases. 760  
 There broken vows and death-bed alms are found.  
 And lovers' hearts with ends of ribband bound,  
 The courtier's promises, and sick men's prayers,  
 The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,  
 Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea, 765  
 Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.

But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,  
 Though marked by none but quick, poetic eyes:  
 (So Rome's great founder to the heavens withdrew,  
 To Proculus alone confessed in view) 770  
 A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,  
 And drew behind a radiant trail of hair  
 Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,  
 The heavens bespangling with dishevelled light.  
 The sylphs behold it kindling as it flies, 775  
 And pleased pursue its progress through the skies.

This the beau monde shall from the Mall  
 survey,  
 And hail with music its propitious ray.



This the blest lover shall for Venus take,  
 And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake. 780  
 This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,  
 When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;  
 And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom  
 The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.  
 Then cease, bright nymph! to mourn thy ravished  
 hair, 785  
 Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!  
 Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,  
 Shall draw such envy as the lock you lost  
 For, after all the murders of your eye,  
 When, after millions slain, yourself shall die: 790  
 When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,  
 And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,  
 This lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,  
 And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

### *The Progress of Poesy*

• A PINDARIC ODE

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,  
 And give to rapture all thy trembling strings,  
 From Helicon's harmonious springs  
 A thousand rills their mazy progress take:  
 The laughing flowers, that round them blow, 5  
 Drink life and fragrance as they flow.  
 Now the rich stream of music winds along  
 Deep, majestic, smooth and strong,  
 Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign:  
 Now rolling down the steep amain, 10  
 Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;  
 The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

782 Galileo's eyes : the telescope. 791 those fair suns : Belinda's eyes 3 Helicon : mountain sacred to the Muses

O Sovereign of the willing soul,  
 Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,  
 Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares 15  
 And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.  
 On Thracia's hills the Lord of War  
 Has curbed the fury of his car,  
 And dropped his thirsty lance at thy command.  
 Perching on the sceptred hand 20  
 Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king  
 With ruffled plumes and flagging wing:  
 Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie  
 The terror of his beak, and lighthings of his eye.  
 Thence the voice, the dance, obey, 25  
 Tempered to thy warbled lay.  
 O'er Idalia's velvet-green  
 The rosy-crownèd Loves are seen  
 On Cytherea's day;  
 With antic Sports, and blue-eyed Pleasures, 30  
 Frisking light in trolic measures;  
 Now pursuing now retreating,  
 Now in circling troops they meet:  
 To brisk notes in cadence beating,  
 Glance their many-twinkling feet. 35  
 Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare:  
 Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay.  
 With arms sublime, that float upon the air,  
 In gliding state she wins her easy way:  
 O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom move 40  
 The bloom of young Desire and purple light of Love.  
 Man's feeble race what ills await,  
 Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,  
 Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,  
 And Death, sad refuge from the storms of fate! 45  
 The fond complaint, my song, disprove,  
 And justify the laws of Jove.  
 Say, has he giv'n in vain the heav'nly Muse?  
 Night, and all her sickly dews,

17. the Lord of War: the god Mars. 21 the feathered king: the eagle, bird sacred to Jove. 29 Cytherea: Venus. 46. fond: foolish

Her spectres wan, and birds of boding cry, . . . 50  
 He gives to range the dreary sky:  
 Till down the eastern cliffs afar  
 Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of  
 war.

In climes beyond the solar road,  
 Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam, 55  
 The Muse has broke the twilight gloom

To cheer the shiv'ring native's dull abode.  
 And oft, beneath the odorour shade  
 Of Chili's boundless forests laid,  
 She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat 60  
 In loose numbers wildly sweet  
 Their feather-cinctured chiefs, and dusky loves.  
 Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,  
 Glory pursue and generous Shame,  
 Th' unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame. 65

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,  
 Isles, that crown th' Ægean deep,  
 Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,  
 Or where Meander's amber waves  
 In lingering lab'rins creep, 70  
 How do your tuneful echoes languish,  
 Mute, but to the voice of anguish?  
 Where each old poetic mountain  
 Inspiration breathed around:  
 Every shade and hallowed fountain 75  
 Murmured deep a solemn sound:  
 Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour,  
 Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.  
 Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,  
 And coward Vice, that revels in her chains. 80  
 When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,  
 They sought, O Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

---

50 **boding** : foreboding 12. 53 **Hyperion** : the sun. 55. **shaggy forms** : Polar bears 56 **broke** : broken (poetic and archaic form)  
 60 **repeat** : recite praises of 61. **loose numbers** : verses lax in metre 62. **feather-cinctured** : wearing a girdle of feathers. 77. **the Nine** : the Muses. 78. **Parnassus** : mountain sacred to the Muses. **Latian plains** : plains round Rome, the Campagna. 81 **Latium** : district round Rome. 82. **Albion** : England.

Far from the sun and summer gale,  
 In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,  
 What time, where lucid Avon strayed, 85  
 To him the mighty mother did unveil  
 Her awful face: the dauntless child  
 Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.  
 This pencil take (she said), whose colours clear  
 Richly paint the vernal year: 90  
 Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!  
 This can unlock the gates of joy;  
 Of horror that, and thrilling fears,  
 Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.

Nor second he, that rode sublime 95  
 Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,  
 The secrets of th' abyss to spy.

He passed the flaming bounds of place and time:  
 The living throne, the sapphire-blaze,  
 Where angels tremble while they gaze, 100  
 He saw; but blasted with excess of light,  
 Closed his eyes in endless night.  
 Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,  
 Wide o'er the fields of glory bear  
 Two coursers of ethereal race, 105  
 With rocks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding  
 pace.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!  
 Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er  
 Scatters from her pictured urn  
 Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn. 110  
 But ah! 'tis heard no more——  
 O lyre divine! what daring spirit  
 Wakes thee now? Though he inherit  
 Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,  
 That the Theban eagle bear 115  
 Sailing with supreme dominion  
 Through the azure deep of air:

---

84 Nature's darling: Shakespeare. 89. pencil: painter's brush.  
 95 he: Milton. 109. pictured: painted. 115. the Theban eagle:  
 Pindar.

Yet oft before his infant eyes would run  
 Such forms as glitter in the Muse's ray.  
 With orient hues, unborrowed of the sun: 120  
 Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way  
 Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,  
 Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

### *- The Bard*

#### A PINDARIC ODE

' RUIN seize thee, ruthless King!  
 Confusion on thy banners wait!  
 Though fanned by Conquest's crimson wing  
 They mock the air with idle state  
 Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail, 5  
 Nor e'en thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail  
 To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,  
 From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!  
 —Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride  
 Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay, 10  
 As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side  
 He wound with toilsome march his long array:—  
 Stout Glo'ster stood aghast in speechless trance;  
 'To arms!' cried Mortimer, and couched his quiver-  
 ing lance

On a rock, whose haughty brow 15  
 Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood  
 Robed in the sable garb of woe,  
 With haggard eyes the poet stood;  
 (Loose his beard and hoary hair  
 Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air; 20  
 And with a master's hand and prophet's fire  
 Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre:  
 'Hark, how each giant oak and desert cave

120. **orient** : bright    2. **confusion** : destruction.    8. **Cambria** :  
 Wales    11 **shaggy** : wooded    16 **Conway** : river in N Wales

Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!  
 O'er thee, O King! their hundred arms they wave, 25  
 Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;  
 Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,  
 To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,  
 That hushed the stormy main: 30  
 Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed:

Mountains, ye mourn in vain  
 Modred, whose magic song  
 Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topt head.  
 On dreary Arvon's shore they lie, 35

Smeared with gore and ghastly pale:  
 Far, far aloof the affrighted ravens sail;  
 The famished eagle screams, and passes by.

Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,  
 Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes, 40

Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,  
 Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—  
 No more I weep. They do not sleep;

On yonder cliffs, a griesly band,  
 I see them sit; they linger yet, 45

Avenge of their native land:  
 With me in dreadful harmony they join,  
 And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.

"Weave the warp and weave the woof,  
 The winding-sheet of Edward's race: 50  
 Give ample room and verge enough

The characters of hell to trace.  
 Mark the year and mark the night  
 When Severn shall re-echo with affright  
 The shrieks of death through Berkley's roof that ring, 55  
 Shrieks of an agonizing king!

She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs  
 That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,  
 From thee be born, who o'er thy country hang-

27-8. Vocal . . . to : echoing. 34. Plinlimmon : mountain in Wales. 35. Arvon's shore : coast of Carnarvon. 44. griesly : grisly. 50 winding-sheet : sheet in which corpse is wrapped

The scourge of heaven! What terrors round him  
wait! 60

Amazement in his van, with flight combined,  
And sorrow's faded form, and solitude behind.

“Mighty victor, mighty lord,  
Low on his funeral couch he lies!  
No pitying heart, no eye, afford 65  
A tear to grace his obsequies.

Is the sable warrior fled?  
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.  
The swarm that in thy noon-tide beam were born?  
—Gone to salute the rising morn. 70

Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,  
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm  
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes:  
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm:  
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway, 75  
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

“Fill high the sparkling bowl,  
The rich repast prepare;  
Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast:  
Close by the regal chair 80

Fell Thirst and Famine scowl  
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.  
Heard ye the din of battle bray,  
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?

Long years of havoc urge their destined course, 85  
And through the kindred squadrons mow their way.

Ye towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,  
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,  
Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,  
And spare the meek usurper's holy head! 90

Above, below, the rose of snow,  
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:  
The bristled boar in infant-germ  
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.

Now, brothers, bending o'er the accursèd loom, 95  
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.



"Edward, lo! to sudden fate  
 (Weave we the woof ; The thread is spun ;)  
 Half of thy heart we consecrate.  
 (The web is wove ; The work is done.)" 100  
 Stay, O stay! nor thus forlorn  
 Leave me unblessed, unpitied, here to mourn:  
 In yon bright track that fires the western skies  
 They melt, they vanish from my eyes.  
 But O! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height 105  
 Descending slow their glittering skirts unroll?  
 Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,  
 Ye unborn ages, crowd not on my soul!  
 No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail:—  
 All hail, ye genuine kings! Britannia's issue, hail! 110

' Girt with many a baron bold,  
 Sublime their starry fronts they rear ;  
 And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old  
 In bearded majesty, appear.  
 In the midst a form divine! 115  
 Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-line:  
 Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,  
 Attempered sweet to virgin-grace,  
 What strings symphonious tremble in the air,  
 What strains of vocal transport round her play? 120  
 Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear ;  
 They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.  
 Bright Rapture calls, and soaring as she sings,  
 Waves in the eye of heaven her many-coloured wings.

' The verse adorn again 125  
 Fierce war, and faithful love,  
 And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.  
 In buskined measures move  
 Pale grief, and pleasing pain,  
 With horror, tyrant of the throbbing breast, 130  
 A voice as of the cherub-choir  
 Gales from blooming Eden bear,  
 And distant warblings lessen on my ear,

---

121. Taliessin : reputed 6th century Welsh bard. 128. buskined : tragic.



That lost in long futurity expire.  
 Fond impious man, think'st thou yon 'sanguine  
 cloud 135

Raised by thy breath, has quenched the orb of day?  
 Tomorrow he repairs the golden flood  
 And warms the nations with redoubled ray.  
 Enough for me: with joy I see

The different doom our fates assign: 140  
 Be thine despair and sceptred care;  
 To triumph and to die are mine.'

—He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height  
 Deep in the roaring-tide he plunged to endless night.'

### *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk*

THE GIFT OF MY COUSIN ANN BODHAM

On that those lips had language! Life has passed  
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smiles I see,  
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me;  
 Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say, 5  
 'Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!'  
 The meek intelligence of those dear eyes  
 (Blest be the art that can immortalize,  
 The art that baffles time's tyrannic claim  
 To quench it) here shines on me still the same. 10  
 Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,  
 Oh welcome guest, though unexpected, here!  
 Who bidd'st me honour with an artless song,  
 Affectionate, a mother lost so long,  
 I will obey, not willingly alone, 15  
 But gladly, as the precept were her own;  
 And, while that face renews my filial grief,  
 Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief—

Shall steep me in Elysian reverie,  
A momentary dream, that thou art she.

20

- My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,  
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?  
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,  
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?  
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unseen, a kiss, 25  
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—  
Ah that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.  
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day,  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,  
• And, turning from my nurs'ry window, drew 30  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!  
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone  
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
The parting sound shall pass my lips no more! 35  
Thy maidens grieved themselves at my concern,  
Oft gave me promise of a quick return.  
What ardently I wished, I long believed,  
And, disappointed still, was still deceived;  
By disappointment every day beguiled, 40  
*Dupe of tomorrow* even from a child.  
Thus many a sad tomorrow came and went,  
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,  
I learned at last submission to my lot;  
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot. 45
- Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more,  
Children not thine have trod my nurs'ry floor;  
And where the gard'ner Robin, day by day,  
Drew me to school along the public way,  
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapped 50  
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet capped,  
'Tis now become a history little known,  
That once we called the past'ral house our own.  
Short-lived possession! but the record fair  
That mem'ry keeps of all thy kindness there, 55  
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced  
A thousand other themes less deeply traced.  
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
• That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid;

Thy morning bounties ere I left my home, 60  
 The biscuit, or confectionary plum ;  
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed  
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed ;  
 All this, and more<sup>e</sup> endearing still than all,  
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall, 65  
 Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and brakes  
 That humour interposed too often makes ;  
 All this still legible in mem'ry's page,  
 And still to be so, to my latest age,  
 Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay 70  
 Such honours to thee as my numbers may ;  
 Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,  
 Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,  
 When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers, 75  
 The violet, the pink, and jessamine,  
 I pricked them into paper with a pin,  
 (And thou wast happier than myself the while,  
 Would'st softly speak, and stroke my head and smile)  
 Could those few pleasant hours again appear, 80  
 Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?  
 I would not trust my heart—the dear delight  
 Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.—  
 But no—what here we call our life is such,  
 So little to be loved, and thou so much, 85  
 That I should ill requite thee to constrain  
 Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou, as a gallant bark from Albion's coast  
 (The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed)  
 Shoots into port at some well-havened isle, 90  
 Where spices breathe and brighter seasons smile,  
 There sits quiescent on the floods that show  
 Her beauteous form reflected clear below,  
 While airs impregnated with incense play  
 Around her, fanning light her streamers gay ; 95  
 So thou, with sails how swift, ha'st reached the shore  
 'Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,'  
 And thy loved consort on the dang'rous tide

---

67. *humour* : capriciousness    71. *numbers* : verses.    88. *Al-*  
*bion* : England.    92. *floods* : waves    94. *incense* : perfume.

Of life, long since, has anchored at thy side.  
 But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest, 100  
 Always from port withheld, always distressed—  
 Me howling winds drive devious, tempest tossed,  
 Sails ripped, seams op'ning wide, and compass lost,  
 And day by day some current's thwarting force  
 Sets me more distant from a prosp'rous course. 105  
 But oh the thought, that thou art safe, and he!  
 That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.  
 My boast is not that I deduce my birth  
 From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth ;  
 But higher far my proud pretensions rise— 110  
 The son of parents passed into the skies.  
 And now, farewell—time, unrevoked, has run  
 His wonted course, yet what I wished is done.  
 By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,  
 I seem t' have lived my childhood o'er again ; 115  
 To have renewed the joys that once were mine,  
 Without the sin of violating thine:  
 And, while the wings of fancy still are free,  
 And I can view this mimic show of thee,  
 Time has but half succeeded in his theft— 120  
 Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

### *Lines*

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON  
 REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING  
 A TOUR. JULY 13, 1798

FIVE years have past ; five summers, with the length  
 Of five long winters! and again I hear  
 These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs  
 With a soft inland murmur.—Once again  
 Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs, 5  
 That on a wild secluded scene impress

---

107. loins ancestors. 112. unrevoked not having turned  
 back at my call (see l. 74).

Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect  
 The landscape with the quiet of the sky.  
 The day is come when I again repose  
 Here, under this dark sycamore, and view 10  
 These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,  
 Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,  
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves  
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see  
 These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines 15  
 Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,  
 Green to the very doör ; and wreaths of smoke  
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!  
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem  
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods, 20  
 Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire  
 The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,  
 Through a long absence, have not been to me  
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:  
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din 25  
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,  
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,  
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;  
 And passing even into my purer mind,  
 With tranquil restoration:—feelings too 30  
 Of unremembered pleasure ; such, perhaps,  
 As have no slight or trivial influence  
 On that best portion of a good man's life,  
 His little, nameless, unremembered, acts  
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust, 35  
 To them I may have owed another gift,  
 Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,  
 In which the burthen of the mystery,  
 In which the heavy and the weary weight  
 Of all this unintelligible world, 40  
 Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,  
 In which the affections gently lead us on.—  
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame

And even the motion of our human blood  
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
 In body, and become a living soul:  
 While with an eye made quiet by the power  
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
 We see into the life of things.

If this •

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—  
 In darkness and amid the many shapes  
 Of joyless daylight; when, the fretful stir  
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,  
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—  
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,  
 O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,  
 How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,  
 With many recognitions dim and faint,  
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity,  
 The picture of the mind revives again:  
 While here I stand, not only with the sense  
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts  
 That in this moment there is life and food  
 For future years. And so I dare to hope,  
 Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when  
 first

I came among these hills; when like a roe  
 I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides  
 Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,  
 Wherever nature led: more like a man  
 Flying from something that he dreads than one  
 Who sought the thing he loved. (For nature then  
 (The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,  
 And their glad animal movements all gone by)  
 To me was all in all.—I cannot paint  
 What then I was. The sounding cataract  
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,  
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,  
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me  
 appetite; a feeling and a love,  
 That had no need of a remoter charm,

By thought supplied, nor any interest  
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,  
 And all its aching joys are now no more,  
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this 85  
 Faint I, nor mourn, nor murmur ; other gifts  
 Have followed ; for such loss, I would believe,  
Abundant recompense. For I have learned  
To look on nature, not as in the hour  
Of thoughtless youth ; (but hearing oftentimes 90  
The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
To chasten and subdue.) And I have felt  
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime 95  
 Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
 And the round ocean and the living air,  
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :  
 A motion and a spirit, that impels 100  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still  
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
 And mountains ; and of all that we behold  
 From this green earth ; of all the mighty world 105  
 Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,  
 And what perceive ; well pleased to recognize  
 In nature and the language of the sense  
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul 110  
 Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,  
 If I were not thus taught, should I the more  
 Suffer my genial spirits to decay :  
 For thou art with me here upon the banks  
 Of this fair river ; thou my dearest Friend, 115  
 My dear, dear Friend ; and in thy voice I catch  
 The language of my former heart, and read  
 My former pleasures in the shooting lights  
 Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while

---

96. *interfused* : permeating, pervading (lit. 'poured within'):



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

57

May I behold in thee what I was once, 120  
 My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,  
 Knowing that Nature never did betray  
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,  
 Through all the years of this our life, to lead  
 From joy to joy: for she can so inform 125  
 The mind that is within us, so impress  
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,  
 Rash judgements, nor the sneers of selfish men,  
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all 130  
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb  
 Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold  
 Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon  
 Shine on thee in thy solitary walk; 135  
 And let the misty mountain-winds be free  
 To blow against thee: and, in after years,  
 When these wild ecstasies shall be matured  
 Into a sober pleasure: when thy mind  
 Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms, 140  
 Thy memory be as a dwelling-place  
 For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,  
 If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,  
 Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts  
 Of tender joy wilt thou remember me, 145  
 And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—  
 If I should be where I no more can hear  
 Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams  
 Of past existence—wilt thou then forget  
 That on the banks of this delightful stream 150  
 We stood together; and that I, so long  
 A worshipper of Nature, hither came  
 Unwearied in that service: rather say  
 With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal  
 Of holier love.” Nor, wilt thou then forget 155  
 That after many wanderings, many years  
 Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,  
 And this green pastoral landscape, were to me  
 More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!



*Ode*INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS  
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Child is father of the Man,  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety

## I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem

Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream. 5  
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—  
Turn wheresoe'er I may,  
By night or day,  
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

## II

The Rainbow comes and goes, 10  
And lovely is the Rose,  
The moon doth with delight  
Look round her when the heavens'are bare,  
Waters on a starry night  
Are beautiful and fair ; 15  
The sunshine is a glorious birth ;  
But yet I know, where'er I go,  
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

## III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,  
And while the young lambs bound 20  
As to the tabor's sound,  
To me alone there came a thought of grief:  
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,  
And I again am strong:  
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep ; 25  
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong :  
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,  
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,  
And all the earth is gay ;

. Land and sea . . . . . 30  
 Give themselves up to jollity,  
 And with the heart of May  
 Doth every Beast keep holiday:—  
 Thou Child of Joy,  
 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy  
 Shepherd-boy! 35

## IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call  
 Ye to each other make<sup>39</sup>; I see  
 The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee,  
 My heart is at your festival,  
 My head hath its coronal, 40  
 The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all  
 Oh evil day! if I were sullen  
 While Earth herself is adorning,  
 This sweet May-morning,  
 And the Children are culling 45  
 On every side,  
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,  
 Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,  
 And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—  
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear! 50  
 —But there's a Tree, of many, one,  
 A single Field which I have looked upon,  
 Both of them speak of something that is gone;  
 The Pansy at my feet *A kind of flower*  
 Doth the same tale repeat: 55  
 Whither is fled the visionary gleam?  
 Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

## V

" Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.  
 " The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
 And cometh from afar:  
 Not in entire forgetfulness,  
 And not in utter nakedness,

39. jubilee: exultant joy. 56. visionary gleam dreamlike  
 brightness.

But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
 From God, who is our home: 65  
 Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
 Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
 Upon the growing Boy,  
 But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,  
 He sees it in his joy; 70  
 The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
 And by the vision splendid  
 Is on his way attended;  
 At length the Man perceives it die away, 75  
 And fade into the light of common day.

## VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;  
 Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,  
 And, even with something of a Mother's mind,  
 And no unworthy aim, 80  
 The homely Nurse doth all she can  
 To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,  
 Forget the glories he hath known,  
 And that imperial palace whence he came.

## VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses, 85  
 A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!  
 See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,  
 Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,  
 With light upon him from his father's eyes!  
 See, at his feet, some little plan or chart, 90  
 Some fragment from his dream of human life,  
 Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;  
 A wedding or a festival,  
 A mourning or a funeral;  
 - And this hath now his heart, 95  
 And unto this he frames his song:  
 Then' will he fit his tongue  
 To dialogues of business, love, or strife;

But it will not be long  
 Ere this be thrown aside, 100  
 And with new joy and pride  
 The little Actor cons another part ;  
 Filling from time to time his ' humorous stage ' ,  
 With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,  
 That Life brings with her in her equipage ; 105  
 As if his whole vocation  
 Were endless imitation.

## VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie  
 Thy Soul's immensity ;  
 Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep 110  
 Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,  
 That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,  
 Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—  
 Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!  
 On whom those truths do rest, 115  
 Which we are toiling all our lives to find,  
 In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;  
 Thou, over whom thy Immortality  
 Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,  
 A Presence which is not to be put by ; 120  
 Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might  
 Of heaven-born, freedom on thy being's height,  
 Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke  
 The years to bring the inevitable yoke,  
 Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife? 125  
 Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,  
 And custom lie upon thee with a weight,  
 Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

## IX

O joy! that in our embers 130  
 Is something that doth live,

---

104. *Persons* : characters    105. *equipage* : retinue.    120. *put by* :  
 thrust aside.

That nature yet remembers  
 What was so fugitive!  
 The thought of our past years in me doth breed  
 Perpetual benediction: not indeed  
 For that which is most worthy to be blest ; 135  
 Delight and liberty, the simple creed  
 Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,  
 With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—  
 Not for these I raise  
 The song of thanks and praise ; 140  
 But for those obstinate questionings  
 Of sense and outward things,  
 Fallings from us, vanishings ;  
 Blank misgivings of a Creature  
 Moving about in worlds not realized, 145  
 High instincts before which our mortal Nature  
 Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised  
 But for those first affections,  
 Those shadowy recollections,  
 Which, be they what they may, 150  
 Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,  
 Are yet a master-light of all our seeing ;  
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make  
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
 Of the eternal Silence ; truths that wake, 155  
 To perish never:  
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,  
 Nor Man nor Boy,  
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,  
 Can utterly abolish or destroy! 160  
 Hence in a season of calm weather  
 Though inland far we be,  
 Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea  
 Which brought us hither,  
 Can in a moment travel thither, 165  
 And see the Children sport upon the shore,  
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

---

131. **nature** : human nature. ' 134 **benediction** : thanksgiving.  
 135 **most** : very. **blest** : given thanks for. 145 **realized** : regarded  
 as fully real. 146. **High instincts** : lofty intuitions. 158. **Man** :  
 manhood **Boy** : boyhood.

## X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!  
 And let the young Lambs bound  
 As to the tabor's sound! 170  
 We in thought will join your throng,  
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,  
 Ye that through your hearts today  
 Feel the gladness of the May!  
 What though the radiance which was once so bright 175  
 Be now for ever taken from my sight,  
 Though nothing can bring back the hour  
 Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;  
 We will grieve not, rather find  
 Strength in what remains behind; 180  
 In the primal sympathy  
 Which having been must ever be;  
 In the soothing thoughts that spring  
 Out of human suffering;  
 In the faith that looks through death, 185  
 In years that bring the philosophic mind.

## XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,  
 Forebode not any severing of our loves!  
 Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;  
 I only have relinquished one delight 190  
 To live beneath your more habitual sway.  
 I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,  
 Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;  
 The innocent brightness of a new-born Day  
 Is lovely yet. 195  
 The Clouds that gather round the setting sun  
 Do take a sober colouring from an eye  
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;  
 Another race hath been, and other palms are won.  
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live, 200  
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,  
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give  
 Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

192. *fret*: wear away a path 199. *palms*: rewards of victory  
 in a race, 202. *blows*: blossoms.

*Britain's Winter*

FROM 'MARMION'

November's sky is chill and drear,  
 November's leaf is red and sear:  
 Late, gazing down the steepy linn,  
 That hems our little garden in,  
 Low in its dark and narrow glen 5  
 You scarce the rivulet might ken,  
 So thick the tangled greenwood grew,  
 So feeble trill'd the streamlet through:  
 Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen 10  
 Through bush and brier, no longer green,  
 An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,  
 Brawls over rock and wild cascade,  
 And, foaming brown with doubled speed,  
 Hurries its waters to the Tweed.

No longer Autumn's glowing red 15  
 Upon our forest hills is shed;  
 No more beneath the evening beam  
 Fair Tweed reflects their purple gleam;  
 Away hath pass'd the heather-bell  
 That bloom'd so rich on Needpathfell; 20  
 Sallow his brow; and russet bare  
 Are now the sister-heights of Yair.  
 The sheep, before the pinching heaven,  
 To shelter'd dale and down are driven,  
 Where yet some faded herbage pines, 25  
 And yet a watery sunbeam shines:  
 In meek despondency they eye  
 The wither'd sward and wintry sky,  
 And far beneath their summer hill,  
 Stray sadly by Glenkinnon's rill: 30  
 The shepherd shifts his mantle's fold,  
 And wraps him closer from the cold;  
 His dogs no merry circles wheel,

---

3 steepy linn: precipitous ravine. 6 ken: see 8 trill'd: flowed with a trilling sound 20 fell: hill 23 pinching heaven: biting cold air 25 pines: is withering

But shivering follow at his heel ;  
 A cowering glance they often cast,  
 As deeper moans the gathering blast. 35  
 To mute and to material things  
 New life revolving summer brings ;  
 The genial call dead Nature hears,  
 And in her glory reappears. 40  
 But oh ! my country's wintry state  
 What second spring shall renovate ?  
 What powerful call shall bid arise  
 The buried warlike and the wise ;  
 The mind that thought for Britain's weal, 45  
 The hand that grasped the victor steel ?  
 The vernal sun new life bestows  
 Even on the meanest flower that blows ;  
 But vainly, vainly may he shine  
 Where glory weeps o'er Nelson's shrine ; 50  
 And vainly pierce the solemn gloom,  
 That shrouds, O Pitt, thy hallowed tomb !

Deep graved in every British heart,  
 O never let those names depart !  
 Say to your sons,—Lo, here his grave, 55  
 Who victor died on Gadite wave.  
 To him, as to the burning levin,  
 Short, bright, resistless course was given.  
 Where'er his country's foes were found,  
 Was heard the fated thunder's sound, 60  
 Till burst the bolt on yonder shore,  
 Rolled, blazed, destroyed,—and was no more.

Nor mourn ye less his perished worth  
 Who bade the conqueror go forth,  
 And launched that thunderbolt of war 65  
 On Egypt, Hafnia, Trafalgar ;  
 Who, born to guide such high emprise,  
 For Britain's weal was early wise ;  
 Alas ! to whom the Almighty gave,  
 For Britain's sins, an early grave ! 70

46 steel : sword. 53. graved : engraved. 56. Gadite wave : sea-off Cadiz. 66. Hafnia : Copenhagen.



His worth who, in his mightiest hour,  
 A bauble held the pride of power,  
 Spurned at the sordid lust of pelf,  
 And served his Albion for herself ;  
 Who, when the frantic crowd amain 75  
 Strained at subjection's bursting rein,  
 O'er their wild mood full conquest gained,  
 The pride, he would not crush, restrained,  
 Showed their fierce zeal a worthier cause,  
 And brought the freeman's arm to aid the freeman's  
 laws. 80

Had'st thou but lived, though stripped of power.  
 A watchman on the lonely tower,  
 Thy thrilling tramp, had roused the land,  
 When fraud or danger were at hand ;  
 By thee, as by the beacon-light, 85  
 Our pilots had kept course aright ;  
 As some proud column, though alone,  
 Thy strength had propped the tottering throne :  
 Now is the stately column broke,  
 The beacon-light is quenched in smoke, 90  
 The trumpet's silver sound is still.  
 The warder silent on the hill !

Oh think, how to his latest day,  
 When Death, just hovering, claimed his prey,  
 With Palinure's unaltered mood, 95  
 Firm at his dangerous post he stood ;  
 Each call for needful rest repelled,  
 With dying hand the rudder held,  
 Till, in his fall, with fateful sway,  
 The steerage of the realm gave way. 100  
 Then, while on Britain's thousand plains,  
 One unpolluted church remains,  
 Whose peaceful bells ne'er sent around  
 The bloody tocsin's maddening sound,  
 But still, upon the hallowed day, 105  
 Convoke the swains to praise and pray ;

While faith and civil peace are dear,  
 Grace this cold marble with a tear,—  
 He, who preserved them, Pitt, lies here!

Nor yet suppress the generous sigh, 110  
 Because his rival slumbers nigh ;  
 Nor be thy *requiescat* dumb,  
 Lest it be said o'er Fox's tomb.  
 For talents mourn, untimely lost,  
 When best employed, and wanted most ; 115  
 Mourn genius high, and lore profound,  
 And wit that loved to play, not wound ;  
 And all the reasoning powers divine,  
 To penetrate, resolve, combine ;  
 And feelings keen, and fancy's glow,— 120  
 They sleep with him who sleeps below :  
 And, if thou mourn'st they could not save  
 From error him who owns this grave,  
 Be every harsher thought suppressed,  
 And sacred be the last long rest. 125  
*Here*, where the end of earthly things  
 Lays heroes, patriots, bards, and kings ;  
 Where stiff the hand, and still the tongue,  
 Of those who fought, and spoke, and sung ;  
*Here*, where the fretted aisles prolong 130  
 The distant notes of holy song,  
 As if some angel spoke agen,  
 ' All peace on earth, good-will to men ;'  
 If ever from an English heart,  
 O, *here* let prejudice depart, 135  
 And, partial feeling cast aside,  
 Record, that Fox a Briton died !  
 When Europe crouched to France's yoke,  
 And Austria bent, and Prussia broke,  
 And the firm Russian's purpose brave 140  
 Was bartered by a timorous slave,  
 Even then dishonour's peace he spurned,  
 The sullied olive-branch returned,

---

112. *requiescat*: prayer for rest of soul of the dead. 126. *Here*:  
 in Westminster Abbey 130 *fretted*: carved in a pattern. 132.  
*agen*: again

Stood for his country's glory fast,  
 And nailed her colours to the mast! 145  
 Heaven, to reward his firmness, gave  
 A portion in this honoured grave,  
 And ne'er held marble in its trust  
 Of two such wondrous men the dust.

With more than mortal powers endowed, 150  
 How high they soared above the crowd!  
 Theirs was no common party race,  
 Jostling by dark intrigue for place ;  
 Like fabled Gods, their mighty war  
 Shook realms and nations in its jar ; 155  
 Beneath each banner proud to stand,  
 Looked up the noblest of the land,  
 Till through the British world were known  
 The names of Pitt and Fox alone.  
 Spells of such force no wizard grave 160  
 E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,  
 Though his could drain the ocean dry,  
 And force the planets from the sky.  
 These spells are spent, and, spent with these,  
 The wine of life is on the lees ; 165  
 Genius, and taste, and talent gone,  
 For ever tombed beneath the stone,  
 Where—taming thought to human pride!—  
 The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.  
 Drop upon Fox's grave the tear, 170  
 'Twill trickle to his rival's bier ;  
 O'er Pitt's the mournful requiem sound,  
 And Fox's shall the notes rebound.  
 The solemn echo seems to cry,  
 'Here let their discord with them die. 175  
 Speak not for those a separate doom,  
 Whom Fate made Brothers in the tomb ;  
 But search the land of living men,  
 Where wilt thou find their like agen?'

Rest, ardent Spirits! till the cries 180  
 Of dying Nature bid you rise ;  
 Not even your Britain's groans can pierce

The leaden silence of your hearse ;  
 Then, O, how impotent and vain  
 This grateful tributary strain! 185  
 Though not unmarked, from northern clime,  
 Ye heard the Border Minstrel's rhyme:  
 His Gothic harp has o'er you rung ;  
 The Bard you deigned to praise, your deathless  
 names has sung. "

## *Christabel*

### PART THE FIRST<sup>1</sup>

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,  
 And the owls have awakened the crowing cock ;  
 Tu—whit!—Tu—whoo!  
 And hark, again! the crowing cock,  
 How drowsily it crew. 5

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,  
 Hath a toothless mastiff, which  
 From her kennel beneath the rock  
 Maketh answer to the clock,  
 Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour ; 10  
 Ever and aye, by shine and shower,  
 Sixteen short howls, not over loud ;  
 Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?  
 The night is chilly, but not dark. 15  
 The thin grey cloud is spread on high,  
 It covers but not hides the sky.  
 The moon is behind, and at the full.  
 And yet she looks both small and dull ;  
 The night is chill, the cloud is grey ; 20  
 'Tis a month before the month of May,  
 And the Spring comes slowly up this way.)

183. hearse . coffin. 187. the Border Minstrel: Scott. 188  
 Gothic harp: unclassical. unpolished poetry.

<sup>1</sup> There is a second part, but the poem was never finished.

The lovely lady, Christabel,  
 Whom her father loves so well,  
 What makes her in the wood so late, 25  
 A furlong from the castle gate?  
 She had dreams all yesternight  
 Of her own betrothed knight ;  
 And she in the midnight wood will pray  
 For the weal of her lover that's far away. 30

She stole along, she nothing spoke,  
 The sighs she heaved were soft and low,  
 And naught was green upon the oak,  
 But moss and rarest mistletoe;  
 She kneels beneath the huge oak tree, 35  
 And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,  
 The lovely lady, Christabel !  
 It moaned as near, as near can be,  
 But what it is, she cannot tell.— 40  
 On the other side it seems to be,  
 Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill ; the forest bare ;  
 Is it the wind that moaneth bleak ?  
 There is not wind enough in the air 45  
 To move away the ringlet curl  
 From the lovely lady's cheek—  
 There is not wind enough to twirl

The one red leaf, the last of its clan,  
 That dances as often as dance it can, 50  
 Hanging so light, and hanging so high,  
 On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.  
 Hush, beating heart of Christabel!  
 Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

She folded her arms beneath her cloak, 55  
 And stole to the other side of the oak.  
 What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,  
 Drest in a silken robe of white,  
 That shadowy in the moonlight shone: 60

The neck that made that white robe wan,  
 Her stately neck, and arms were bare ;  
 Her blue-veined feet unsandalled were,  
 And wildly glittered here and there  
 The gems entangled in her hair. 65  
 I guess, 'twas frightful there to see  
 A lady so richly clad as she—  
 Beautiful exceedingly!

'Mary mother, save me now!'  
 (Said Christabel) 'And who art thou?' 70

The lady strange made answer meet,  
 And her voice was faint and sweet:—  
 'Have pity on my sore distress,  
 I scarce can speak for weariness:  
 Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!' 75  
 Said Christabel, 'How cam'st thou here?'  
 And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,  
 Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

'My sire is of a noble line,  
 And my name is Geraldine: 80  
 Five warriors seized me yesternorn,  
 Me, even me, a maid forlorn:  
 They choked my cries with force and fright,  
 And tied me on a palfrey white.  
 The palfrey was as fleet as wind, 85  
 And they rode furiously behind,  
 They spurred amain, their steeds were white ;  
 And once we crossed the shade of night.  
 As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,  
 I have no thought what men they be ; 90  
 Nor do I know how long it is  
 (For I have lain entranced, I wis)  
 Since one, the tallest of the five,  
 Took me from the palfrey's back,  
 A wary woman, scarce alive. 95  
 Some muttered words his comrades spoke:  
 He placed me underneath this oak,  
 He swore they would return with haste ;  
 Whither they went I cannot tell—



To the lady by her side,  
 'Praise we the Virgin all divine  
 Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!' 140  
 'Alas, alas!' said Geraldine,  
 'I cannot speak for weariness.'  
 So free from danger, free from fear,  
 They crossed the court: right glad they were.  
 Outside her kennel, the mastiff old 145  
 Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.  
 The mastiff old did not awake,  
 Yet she an angry moan did make!  
 And what can ail the mastiff bitch?  
 Never till now she uttered yell 150  
 Beneath the eye of Christabel.  
 Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch':  
 For what can ail the mastiff bitch?  
 They passed the hall, that echoes still,  
 Pass as lightly as you will! 155  
 The brands were flat, the brands were dying.  
 Amid their own white ashes lying;  
 But when the lady passed, there came  
 A tongue of light, a fit of flame;  
 And Christabel saw the lady's eye, 160  
 And nothing else saw she thereby,  
 Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,  
 Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.  
 'O softly tread,' said Christabel,  
 'My father seldom sleepeth well.' 165  
 Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,  
 And jealous of the listening air  
 They steal their way from stair to stair,  
 Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,  
 And now they pass the Baron's room. 170  
 As still as death with stifled breath!  
 And now have reached her chamber door;  
 And now doth Geraldine press down  
 The rushes of the chamber floor.

152. *scritch* : screech. 159. *fit* . momentary flash 167. *jealous* : suspicious.





And why with hollow voice cries she,  
• 'Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—  
Though thou her guardian spirit be,  
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me.' . 210

•  
Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,  
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue— 215  
'Alas!' said she, 'this ghastly ride—  
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!'  
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,  
And faintly said, ''Tis over now!'

•  
Again the wild-flower wine she drank: 220  
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,  
And from the floor whereon she sank,  
The lofty lady stood upright; .  
She was most beautiful to see,  
Like a lady of a far countrée. 225

And thus the lofty lady spake—  
'All they, who live in the upper sky,  
Do love you, holy Christabel!  
And, you love them, and for their sake,  
And for the good which me befell, 230  
Even I in my degree will try,  
Fair maiden, to requite you well.  
But now unrode yourself; for I  
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.'

Quoth Christabel, 'So let it be!' 235  
And as the lady bade, did she.  
Her gentle limbs did she undress,  
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe  
So many thoughts moved to and fro, 240  
That vain it were her lids to close;  
So half-way from the bed she rose,  
And on her elbow did recline  
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed, 245  
 And slowly rolled her eyes around ;  
 Then drawing in her breath aloud,  
 Like one that shuddered, she unbound  
 The cincture from beneath her breast:  
 Her silken robe, and inner vest, 250  
 Dropt to her feet, and full in view,  
 Behold! her bosom and half her side—  
 A sight to dream of, not to tell!  
 O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs, 255  
 Ah! what a stricken look was hers!  
 Deep from within she seems half-way  
 To lift some weight with sick assay,  
 And eyes the maid and seeks delay;  
 Then suddenly as one defied 260  
 Collects herself in scorn and pride,  
 And lay down by the Maiden's side!—  
 And in her arms the maid she took,  
 Ah wel-a-day!

And with low voice and doleful look 265  
 These words did say:  
 'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,  
 Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!  
 Thou knowest tonight, and wilt know tomorrow,  
 This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow; 270  
 But vainly thou warrest,  
 For this is alone in  
 Thy power to declare,  
 That in the dim forest  
 Thou heard'st a low moaning, 275  
 And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:  
 And didst bring her home with thee in love and in  
 charity,  
 To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.'

#### THE CONCLUSION TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see  
 The lady Christabel, when she 280  
 Was praying at the old oak tree.

Amid the jagged shadows  
 Of mossy leafless boughs,  
 Kneeling in the moonlight,  
 To make her gentle vows; 285  
 Her slender palms together prest,  
 Heaving sometimes on her breast;  
 Her face resigned to bliss or bale—  
 Her face, oh call it fair, not pale,  
 And both blue eyes more bright than clear, 290  
 Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)  
 Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,  
 Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,  
 Dreaming that alone, which is— 295  
 O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,  
 The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?  
 And lo! the worker of these harms,  
 That holds the maiden in her arms,  
 Seems to slumber still and mild, 300  
 As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,  
 O Geraldine! since arms of thine  
 Have been the lovely lady's prison.  
 O Geraldine! one hour was thine— 305  
 Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,  
 The night-birds all that hour were still.  
 But now they are jubilant anew,  
 From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!  
 Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell! 310

And see! the lady Christabel  
 Gathers herself from out her trance;  
 Her limbs relax, her countenance  
 Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids  
 Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds— 315  
 Large tears that leave the lashes bright!  
 And oft the while she seems to smile  
 As infants at a sudden light!

306 tairn : tarn, small mountain lake. 307. still : silent. 310.  
 fell : moor.

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,  
 Like a youthful hermitess, 320  
 Beauteous in a wilderness,  
 Who, praying always, prays in sleep.  
 And, if she move unquietly,  
 Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,  
 Comes back and tingles in her feet. 325

What if her guardian spirit 'twere,  
 What if she knew her mother near?  
 But this she knows, in joys and woes,  
 That saints will aid if men will call: 330  
 For the blue sky bends over all!

## Venice

FROM 'CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE'

### I

I STOOD in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;  
 A palace and a prison on each hand:  
 I saw from out the wave her structures rise  
 As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:  
 A thousand years their cloudy wings expand 5  
 Around me, and a dying Glory smiles  
 O'er the far times, when many a subject land  
 Look'd to the wingèd Lion's marble piles,  
 Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred  
 isles!

### II

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean, 10  
 Rising with her tiara of proud towers  
 At airy distance, with majestic motion,  
 A ruler of the waters and their powers:  
 And such she was:—her daughters had their dowers  
 From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East 15  
 Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers,  
 In purple was she robed, and of her feast  
 Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

## III

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,  
 And silent rows the songless gondolier ; 20  
 Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,  
 And music meets not always now the ear:  
 Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here.  
 States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth not die,  
 Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear, 25  
 The pleasant place of all festivity,  
 The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

## IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond  
 Her name in story, and her long array  
 Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond 30  
 Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway;  
 Ours is a trophy which will not decay  
 With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,  
 And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away—  
 The keystones of the arch! though all were o'er, 35  
 For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

## V

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord,  
 And, annual marriage now no more renew'd,  
 The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,  
 Neglected garment of her widowhood! 40  
 St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood  
 Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,  
 Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,  
 And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour  
 When Venice was a queen with an unequalled 45  
 dower.

## VI

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns—  
 An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;  
 Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains  
 Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt  
 From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt 50

The sunshine for a while, and downward go  
 Like lawine, loosen'd from the mountain's belt ;  
 Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo !  
 Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe.

## VII

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass, 55  
 Their gilded collars glittering in the sun ;  
 But is not Doria's menace come to pass?  
 Are they not *bridled*?—Venice, lost and won,  
 Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,  
 Sinks, like a seaweed, into whence she rose! 60  
 Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,  
 Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,  
 From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

## VIII

In youth she was all glory,—a new Tyre ;  
 Her very by-word sprung from victory, 65  
 The ' Planter of the Lion ', which through fire  
 And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea ;  
 Though making many slaves, herself still free,  
 And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite ;  
 Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye 70  
 Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight!  
 For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight.

## IX

Statues of glass—all shiver'd—the long file  
 Of her dead Doges are declined to dust ;  
 But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous  
 pile 75  
 Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust ;  
 Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,  
 Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,  
 Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must  
 Too oft remind her who and what inthrals, 80  
 Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

---

52. lawine : avalanche (German, *lawine*). 65. by-word : nick-name. 69. Ottomite : Ottoman Turk.

## X

'When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,  
 And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke of war,  
 Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,  
 Her voice their only ransom from afar: 85  
 See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car  
 Of the o'ermaster'd victor stops, the reins  
 Fall from his hands, his idle scimitar  
 Starts from its belt—he rends his captive's chains,  
 And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his  
 strains. ) 90

## XI

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,  
 Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,  
 Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,  
 Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot  
 Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot 95  
 Is shameful to the nations,—most of all,  
 Albion! to thee: the Ocean queen should not  
 Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall  
 Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

### *The Pirate Father's Return*

FROM 'DON JUAN'

## I

THE good old gentleman had been detain'd  
 By winds and waves, and some important captures  
 And, in the hope of more, at sea remain'd,  
 Although a squall or two had damp'd his raptures,  
 By swamping one of the prizes; he had chain'd  
 His prisoners, dividing them like chapters  
 In number'd lots; they all had cuffs and collars,  
 And averaged each from ten to a hundred dollars.



## II

Some he disposed of off Cape Matapan,  
 Among his friends the Mainots ; some he sold 10  
 To his Tunis correspondents, save one man  
 Toss'd overboard unsaleable (being old):  
 The rest—save here and there some richer one,  
 Reserved for future ransom—in the hold,  
 Were link'd alike, as for the common people he 15  
 Had a large order from the Dey of Tripoli.

## III

The merchandise was served in the same way,  
 Pieced out for different marts in the Levant,  
 Except some certain portions of the prey,  
 Light classic articles of female want, 20  
 French stuffs, lace, tweezers, toothpicks, teapot, tray,  
 Guitars and castanets from Alicant,  
 All which selected from the spoil he gathers,  
 Robb'd for his daughter by the best of fathers

## IV

A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw, 25  
 Two parrots, with a Persian cat and kittens,  
 He chose from several animals he saw—  
 A terrier, too, which once had been a Briton's,  
 Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,  
 The peasants gave the poor dumb thing a  
 pittance. 30  
 These to secure in this strong blowing weather,  
 He caged in one huge hamper all together

## V

Then having settled his marine affairs,  
 Despatching single cruisers here and there,  
 His vessel having need of some repairs, 35  
 He shaped his course to where his daughter fair

---

9. **Cape Matapan** : most southerly point of Greece 16 **Dey** : title of ruler. 22. **Alicant** : on the SE. coast of Spain. 25. **mackaw** : macaw. 29. **Ithaca** : Ulysses' island off the W. coast of Greece

Continued still her hospitable cares ;

But that part of the coast being shoal and bare,<sup>1</sup>  
And rough with reets which ran out many a mile,  
His port lay on the other side o' the isle.

40

## VI

And there he went ashore without delay,

Having no custom-house nor quarantine

To ask him awkward questions on the way,

About the time and place where he had been:

He left his ship to be hove down next day,

45

With orders to the people to careen;

So that all hands were busy beyond measure,

In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and treasure.

## VII

Arriving at the summit of a hill

Which overlook'd the white walls of his home.

50

He stopp'd.—What singular emotions fill

Their bosoms who have been induced to roam!

With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill—

With love for many, and with fears for some;

All feelings which o'erleap the years long lost,

55

And bring our hearts back to their starting-post.

## VIII

The approach of home to husbands and to sires,

After long travelling by land or water,

Most naturally some small doubt inspires—

A female family's a serious matter;

60

(None trusts the sex more, or so much admires—

But they hate flattery, so I never flatter;)

Wives in their husbands' absences grow subtler,

And daughters sometimes run off with the butler.

## IX

(An honest gentleman at his return

65

May not have the good fortune of Ulysses;

Not all lone matrons for their husbands mourn,

Or show the same dislike to suitors' kisses;

The odds are that he finds a handsome urn . . .  
 To his memory—and two or three young misses 70  
 Born to some friend, who holds his wife and riches;—  
 And that *his* Argus bites him by—the breeches.

## X

Lambro, our sea-solicitor, who had  
 Much less experience of dry land than ocean,  
 On seeing his own chimney-smoke, felt glad; 75  
 But not knowing metaphysics, had no notion  
 Of the true reason of his not being sad,  
 Or that of any other strong emotion,  
 He loved his child, and would have wept the loss of her,  
 But knew the 'cause no more than a philosopher. 80

## XI

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,  
 His garden trees all shadowy and green,  
 He heard his rivulet's light bubbling run,  
 The distant dog-bark; and perceived between  
 The umbrage of the wood so cool and dun, 85  
 The moving figures, and the sparkling sheen  
 Of arms (in the East all arm)—and various dyes  
 Of colour'd garbs, as bright as butterflies.

## XII

And as the spot where they appear he nears,  
 Surprised at these unwonted signs of idling, 90  
 He hears—alas! no music of the spheres,  
 But an unhallow'd, earthly sound of fiddling!  
 A melody which made him doubt his ears,  
 The cause being past his guessing or unriddling;  
 A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after, 95  
 A most unoriental roar of laughter.

## XIII

And still more nearly to the place advancing,  
 Descending rather quickly the declivity,  
 Through the waved branches, o'er the green sward  
 glancing,

Midst other indications of festivity, 100  
 Seeing a troop of his domestics dancing  
 Like dervises, who turn as on a pivot, he  
 Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so martial,  
 To which the Levantines are very partial.

## XIV

And further on a group of Grecian girls, 105  
 The first and tallest her white kerchief waving,  
 Were strung together like a row of pearls,  
 Link'd hand in hand, and dancing: each too having  
 Down her white neck long floating auburn curls—  
 (The least of which would set ten poets raving); 110  
 Their leader sang—and bounded to her song,  
 With choral step and voice, the virgin throng.

## XV

And here, assembled cross-legg'd round their trays,  
 Small social parties just begun to dine;  
 Pilaus and meats of all sorts met the gaze, 115  
 And flasks of Samian and of Chian wine,  
 And sherbet cooling in the porous vase;  
 Above them their dessert grew on its vine,  
 The orange and pomegranate nodding o'er  
 Dropp'd in their laps, scarce pluck'd, their mellow  
 store. 120

## XVI

A band of children, round a snow-white ram,  
 There wreath his venerable horns with flowers;  
 While peaceful as if still an unwean'd lamb,  
 The patriarch of the flock all gently cowers  
 His sober head, majestically tame, 125  
 Or eats from out of the palm, or playful lowers  
 His brow, as if in act to butt, and then  
 Yielding to their small hands, draws back again.

102. dervises : dervishes 116. Samos and Chios : Greek islands  
 noted for their wines.

## XVII

Their classical profiles, and glittering dresses,  
 Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic cheeks, 130  
 Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long tresses,  
 The gesture which enchants, the eye that speaks,  
 The innocence which happy childhood blesses,  
 Made quite a picture of these little Greeks ;  
 So that the philosophical beholder 135  
 Sigh'd for their sakes—that they should e'er grow  
 older.

## XVIII

Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales  
 To a sedate grey circle of old smokers,  
 Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,  
 Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers, 140  
 Of charms to make good gold and cure bad ails,  
 Of rocks bewitch'd that open to the knockers,  
 Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,  
 Transform'd their lords to beasts (but that's a fact).

## XIX

Here was no lack of innocent diversion 145  
 For the imagination or the senses,  
 Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the Persian,  
 All pretty pastimes in which no offence is ;  
 But Lambro saw all these things with aversion,  
 Perceiving in his absence such expenses, 150  
 Dreading that climax of all human ills  
 The inflammation of his weekly bills.

## XX

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ  
 The happiest mortals even after dinner!  
 A day of gold from out an age of iron 155  
 Is all that life allows the luckiest sinner ;  
 Pleasure (whene'er she sings, at least) 's a siren,  
 That lures, to flay alive, the young beginner ;  
 Lambro's reception at his people's banquet  
 Was such as fire accords to a wet blanket. ) 160

## XXI

He—being a man who seldom used a word  
 Too much, and wishing gladly to surprise  
 (In general he surprised men with the sword)  
 His daughter—had not sent<sup>e</sup> before to advise  
 Of his arrival, so that no one stirr'd ; 165  
 And long he paused to reassure his eyes,  
 In fact much more astonished than delighted,  
 To find so much good company invited.

## XXII

He did not know (alas! how men will lie!)  
 That a report (especially the Greeks) 170  
 Avouch'd his death (such people never die)  
 And put his house in mourning several weeks,—  
 But now their eyes and also lips<sup>e</sup> were dry ;  
 The bloom, too, had return'd to Haidée's cheeks.  
 Her tears, too, being return'd into their fount, 175  
 She now kept house upon her own account.

## XXIII

Hence, all this rice, meat, dancing, wine, and fiddling,  
 Which turn'd the isle into a place of pleasure ;  
 The servants all were getting drunk or idling,  
 A life which made them happy beyond measure, 180  
 Her father's hospitality seem'd middling,  
 Compared with what Haidée did with his treasure ;  
 'Twas wonderful how things went on improving,  
 While she had not one hour to spare from loving.

## XXIV

Perhaps you think, in stumbling on this feast, 185  
 He flew into a passion, and in fact  
 There was no mighty reason to be pleased ;  
 Perhaps you prophesy some sudden act,  
 The whip, the rack, or dungeon at the least,  
 To teach his people to be more exact, 190  
 And that, proceeding at a very high rate,  
 He show'd the royal *penchants* of a pirate.

## XXV

You're wrong.—He was the mildest manner'd man  
 That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat,  
 With such true breeding of a gentleman,  
 You never could divine his real thought  
 No courtier could, and scarcely woman car  
 Gird more deceit within a petticoat;  
 Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,  
 He was so great a loss to good society.

195

200

*Ode to the West Wind*

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,  
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead  
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,  
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,  
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

5

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,  
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until  
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill  
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)  
 With living hues and odours plain and hill:

10

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere  
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

## II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commo-  
 tion,

15

Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed.  
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,



Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread  
 On the blue surface of thine airy surge,  
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head 20  
 Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge  
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,  
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge  
 Of the dying year, to which this closing night  
 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre, 25  
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might  
 Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere  
 Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

## III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams  
 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, 30  
 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,  
 Beside a pumice isle in Baiac's bay,  
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers  
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,  
 All overgrown with azure moss and flowers 35  
 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou  
 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers  
 Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below  
 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear  
 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know 40  
 Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with tear;  
 And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

## IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear,  
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;  
 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share 45  
 The impulse of thy strength, only less free  
 Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even  
 I were as in my boyhood, and could be

18. **Angels** : heavenly messengers 21. **Maenad** : frenzied woman  
 worshipper of Bacchus. 31. **coil** : noise. 34. **intenser day** : brighter  
 daylight. 39 **oozy** : growing in the mud at the bottom of the sea



The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,  
 As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed 50  
 Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven  
 As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.  
 Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!  
 I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!  
 heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed 55  
 One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

## v

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:  
 What if my leaves are falling like its own!  
 The tumult of thy mighty harmonies  
 Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, 60  
 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
 My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!  
 Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
 Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth  
 And, by the incantation of this verse, 65  
 Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
 Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
 Be through my lips to unawakened earth  
 The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,  
 If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? 70

*Adonais*

I WEEP for Adonais—he is dead!  
 O, weep for Adonais! though our tears  
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!  
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years  
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers, 5

And teach them thine own sorrow, say: 'With me  
 Died Adonais; till the Future dares  
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be  
 An echo and a light unto eternity!'

## II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay, 10  
 When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies  
 In darkness? where was lorn Urania  
 When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,  
 'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise  
 She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath 15  
 Rekindled all the fading melodies,  
 With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,  
 He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

## III

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!  
 Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep! 20  
 Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed  
 Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep  
 Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;  
 For he is gone, where all things wise and fair  
 Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep 25  
 Will yet restore him to the vital air;  
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

## IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!  
 Lament anew, Urania!—He died,  
 Who, was the Sire of an immortal strain, 30  
 Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,  
 The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,  
 Trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite  
 Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,  
 Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite 35  
 Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

25 Deep : underworld of the dead 29 He : Milton 35. Sprite : spirit

## . V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!  
 Not all to that bright station dared to climb;  
 And happier they their happiness who knew,  
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time 40  
 In which suns perished; others more sublime,  
 Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,  
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;  
 And some yet live, treading the thorny road,  
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene  
 abode. 45

## VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished—  
 The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,  
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,  
 And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;  
 Most musical of mourners, weep anew! 50  
 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,  
 The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew  
 Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;  
 The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

## VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death 55  
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,  
 He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,  
 A grave among the eternal.—Come away!  
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day  
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still 60  
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;  
 Awake him not! surely he takes his fill  
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill

## VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—  
 Within the twilight chamber spreads apace 65  
 The shadow of white Death, and at the door  
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace.

His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place ;  
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe  
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface 70  
 So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law  
 Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,  
 The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,  
 Who were his flocks, whom, near the living streams 75  
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught  
 The love which was its music; wander not,—  
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,  
 But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their  
 lot  
 Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain, 80  
 They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,  
 And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries ;  
 ' Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead ;  
 See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes, 85  
 Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies  
 A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.'  
 Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!  
 She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain  
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain. 90

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew  
 Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;  
 Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw  
 The wreath upon him, like an anadem,  
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem; 95  
 Another in her wilful grief would break  
 Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem  
 A greater loss with one which was more weak;  
 And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

---

69 The eternal Hunger : Death, the ever-hungry. 94. anadem :  
 small crown or wreath for the head.

## XII

Another Splendour on his mouth alit, 100  
 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath  
 Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,  
 And pass into the panting heart beneath  
 With lightning and with music: the damp death  
 Quenched its caress upon his icy lips; 105  
 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath  
 Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,  
 It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

## XIII

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,  
 Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies, 110  
 Splendours, and Glòoms, and glimmering Incarnations  
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies,  
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,  
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam  
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes, 115  
 Came in slow pomp ;—the moving pomp might seem  
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream

## XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,  
 From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,  
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought 120  
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,  
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,  
 Dimmed the aerial eyes that kindle day;  
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,  
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay, 125  
 And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

## XV

—Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,  
 And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,  
 And will no more reply to winds or fountains,  
 Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray, 130

100. **Splendour** : splendid dream. 107 **clips** : embraces, envelops.  
 116. **pomp** : procession (older sense).

Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day ;  
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear  
 Than those for whose disdain she pined away  
 Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear,  
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear. 135

## XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down  
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,  
 Or they dead leaves ; since her delight is flown,  
 For whom should she have waked the sullen year?  
 To Phoebus was not Hyacinth 'so dear 140  
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both  
 Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere  
 Amid the faint companions of their youth,  
 With dew all turned to tears ; odour, to sighing ruth

## XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale, 145  
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain ;  
 Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale  
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain  
 Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,  
 Soaring and screaming round her empty nest, 150  
 As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain  
 Light on his head, who pierced thy innocent breast,  
 And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

## XVIII

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,  
 But grief returns with the revolving year ; 155  
 The airs and streams renew their joyous tone ;  
 The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear ;  
 Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier ;  
 The amorous birds now pair in every brake,  
 And build their mossy homes in field and brere ; 160  
 And the green lizard, and the golden snake,  
 Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake

## XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and  
Ocean

A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst  
As it has ever done, with change and motion, 165  
From the great morning of the world when first  
God dawned on Chaos ; in its stream immersed,  
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light ;  
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst ;  
Diffuse themselves ; and spend in love's delight 170  
The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

## XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,  
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath ;  
Like incarnations, of the stars, when splendour  
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death, 175  
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath ;  
Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows  
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath  
By sightless lightning?—th' intense atom glows  
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose. 180

## XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,  
But for our grief, as if it had not been,  
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!  
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene  
The actors or spectators? Great and mean 185  
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.  
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,  
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,  
Morth follow month with woe, and year wake year to  
sorrow.

## XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more! 190  
— 'Wake thou,' cried Misery, 'childless Mother, rise  
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,  
A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs.'

---

172 leprous : putrefying. 179 th' intense atom : the mind,  
which is like a glowing spark



And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,  
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song 195  
 Had held in holy silence, cried: 'Arise!'  
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,  
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

## XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs  
 Out of the East, and follows wild and drear 200  
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,  
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,  
 Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear  
 So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;  
 So saddened round her like an atmosphere 205  
 Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way  
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

## XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,  
 Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,  
 And human hearts, which to her aery tread 210  
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible  
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:  
 And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than  
 • they,  
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel,  
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May, 215  
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

## XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,  
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,  
 Blushed to annihilation, and the breath  
 Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light 220  
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.  
 'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,  
 As silent lightning leaves the starless night!  
 Leave me not!' cried Urania: her distress  
 Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain •  
 caress. 225

---

198. ambrosial : divinely sweet. the . . . splendour : i.e. Urania.



## XXVI

'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;  
 Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;  
 And in my heartless breast and burning brain  
 That word that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,  
 With food of saddest memory kept alive, 230  
 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part  
 Of thee, my Adonais! I would give  
 All that I am to be as, thou now art!  
 But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

## XXVII

'O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert, 235  
 Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men  
 Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart  
 Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?  
 Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then  
 Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear? 240  
 Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when  
 Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,  
 The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like  
 deer.

## XXVIII

'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;  
 The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead; 245  
 The vultures to the conqueror's banner true  
 Who feed where Desolation first has fed,  
 And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,  
 When, like Apollo, from his golden bow  
 The Pythian of the age one arrow sped 250  
 And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,  
 They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

## XXIX

'The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;  
 He sets, and each ephemeral insect then  
 Is gathered into death without a dawn, 255  
 And the immortal stars awake again;

---

238. unpastured : unfed, starving.

So is it in the world of living men:  
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight  
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when  
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light 260  
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.'

xxx

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,  
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;  
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame  
Over his living head like Heaven is bent, 265  
An early but enduring monument,  
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song  
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent  
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,  
And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his  
tongue. 270

xxxI

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,  
A phantom among men; companionless  
As the last cloud of an expiring storm  
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,  
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness, 275  
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray  
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,  
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,  
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

xxxII

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift— 280  
A Love in desolation masked;—a Power  
Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift  
The weight of the superincumbent hour;  
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,  
A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak 285  
Is it not broken? On the withering flower  
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek  
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may  
break.

---

268. Ierne : Ireland. 280. pardlike : like a leopard. 283 superincumbent : overhanging.

## XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,  
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue; 290  
 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,  
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew  
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,  
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart  
 Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew 295  
 He came the last, neglected and apart;  
 A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

## XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan  
 Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band  
 Who in another's fate now wept his own, 300  
 As in the accents of an unknown land  
 He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned  
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured: 'Who art thou?'  
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand  
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow, 305  
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it should be  
 so!

## XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?  
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?  
 What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,  
 In mockery of monumental stone, 310  
 The heavy heart heaving without a moan?  
 If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,  
 Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,  
 Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,  
 The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice. 315

## XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!  
 What deaf and viperous murderer could crown  
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?  
 The nameless worm would now itself disown:

It felt, yet cou'd escape, the magic tone 320  
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,  
 But what was howling in one breast alone,  
 Silent with expectation of the song,  
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

## XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame! 325  
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,  
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!  
 But be thyself, and know thyself to be!  
 And ever at thy season be thou free  
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow: 330  
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;  
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,  
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

## XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled  
 Far from these carrion kites that scream below; 335  
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;  
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now—  
 Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow  
 Back to the burning fountain whence it came.  
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow 340  
 Through time and change, unquenchably the same,  
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

## XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—  
 He hath awakened from the dream of life—  
 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep 345  
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
 And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife  
 Invulnerable nothings.—We decay  
 Like corpses in a charnel, fear and grief  
 Convulse us and consume us day by day, 350  
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

---

320. *escape* : evade, remain insensitive to. 327. *noteless* : insignificant. 335. *carrion* : feeding on dead bodies.

## XL

He has outsoared the 'shadow of our night;  
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
 Can touch him not and torture not again; 355  
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain  
 He is secure, and now can never mourn  
 A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;  
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,  
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn. 360

## XLI

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;  
 Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,  
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee  
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;  
 Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan! 365  
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,  
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown  
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare  
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

## XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard 370  
 His voice in all her music, from the moan  
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;  
 He is a presence to be felt and known  
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move 375  
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;  
 Which wields the world with never-wearied love,  
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

## XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness  
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear 380  
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,  
 All new successions to the forms they wear;

Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight  
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear; 385  
And bursting in its beauty and its might  
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendours of the firmament of time  
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;  
Like stars to their appointed height they climb, 390  
And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought  
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,  
And love and life contend in it, for what  
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there 395  
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown  
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,  
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton  
Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not 400  
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought  
And as he fell and as he lived and loved  
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,  
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:  
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reprovèd. 405

XLVI

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,  
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die  
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,  
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.  
'Thou art become as one of us,' they cry, 410  
'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long  
Swung blind in unascended majesty,  
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.  
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!'

399. the **Unapparent** : the invisible world of ultimate reality.

414. **Vesper** : evening star.

## XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth, 415  
 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.  
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;  
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light  
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might  
 Sate the void circumference: then shrink 420  
 Even to a point within our day and night;  
 And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink  
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink

## XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,  
 Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought 425  
 That ages, empires, and religions there  
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;  
 For such as he can lend,—they borrow not  
 Glory from those who made the world their prey;  
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought 430  
 Who waged contention with their time's decay.  
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

## XLIX

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,  
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness;  
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise, 435  
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress  
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness  
 Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead  
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access  
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead 440  
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

## L

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time  
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;  
 And one keen pyramid, with wedge sublime,  
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned 445



This refuge for his memory, doth stand  
 Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,  
 A field is spread, on which a newer band  
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,  
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished  
 breath.

450

## LI

Here pause : these graves are all too young as yet  
 To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned  
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,  
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,  
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find  
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,  
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind  
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.  
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

455

## LII

The One remains, the many change and pass; 460  
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,  
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek! 465  
 Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,  
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak  
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

## LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?  
 Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here 470  
 They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!  
 A light is passed from the revolving year,  
 And man, and woman; and what still is dear  
 Attracts to crash, repels to make thee wither.  
 The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near: 475  
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,  
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together.



## LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse 480  
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
 Which through the web of being blindly wove  
 By man and 'beast and earth and air and sea,  
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
 The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me, 485  
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

## LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song  
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,  
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng  
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given; 490  
 The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!  
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;  
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,  
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,  
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are. 495

*The Eve of St Agnes*

## I

ST AGNES' EVE—ah, bitter chill it was!  
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
 The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,  
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold:  
 Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while he told 5  
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
 Like pious incense from a censer old,  
 Seemed taking flight for heaven without a death,  
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he  
 saith.)

---

482. wove : woven (poetic form). 495. Beacons : signals.

5. told : counted the beads of.

## II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man; 10  
 Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,  
 And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,  
 Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:  
 The sculptured dead, on each side seem to freeze,  
 Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails: 15  
 Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,  
 He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails  
 To think how they may ache, in icy hoods and mails.)

## III

Northward he turneth through a little door,  
 And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue 20  
 Flattered to tears this aged man and poor.  
 But no—already had his death-bell rung;  
 The joys of all his life were said and sung:  
 His was harsh penance on St Agnes' Eve:  
 Another way he went, and soon among 25  
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,  
 And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

## IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;  
 And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,  
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft, 30  
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:  
 The level chambers, ready with their pride,  
 Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:  
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,  
 Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests, 35  
 With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on  
 their breasts,

## V

At length burst in the argent revelry,  
 With plume, tiara, and all rich array,  
 Numerous as shadows haunting faerly

21. Flattered: deceptively soothed. 37. argent: brilliant (*lit.* silver) revelry: revellers 38 tiara ladies' jewelled coronet.

The brain new-stuffed, in youth, with triumphs  
 gay 40  
 Of old romance: These let us wish away,  
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,  
 Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,  
 On love, and winged St Agnes' saintly care,  
 As she had heard old dames full many times declare. 45

## VI

They told her how, upon St Agnes' Eve,  
 Young virgins might have visions of delight,  
 And soft adorings from their loves receive  
 Upon the honeyed middle of the night,  
 If ceremonies due they did aright; 50  
 As, supperless to bed they must retire,  
 And couch supine their beauties, lily white;  
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require  
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

## VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline: 55  
 The music, yearning like a God in pain,  
 She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine  
 Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train  
 Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain  
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier, 60  
 And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,  
 But she saw not: her heart was elsewhere;  
 She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

## VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,  
 Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short: 65  
 The hallowed hour was near at hand, she sighs  
 Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort  
 Of whisperers in anger or in sport;  
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,  
 Hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amort, 70  
 Save to St Agnes and her lambs unshorn,  
 And all the bliss to be before tomorrow morn.

---

40. triumphs : triumphal processions. 60. tiptoe : eager. 70. Hoodwinked : blinded all amort : unconscious of everything (lit. dead to.)

## IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,  
 She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,  
 Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire 75  
 For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,  
 Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores  
 All saints to give him sight of Madeline,  
 But for one moment in the tedious hours,  
 That he might gaze and worship all unseen; 80  
 Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such  
 things have been.

## X

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell,  
 All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords  
 Will storm his heart, Love's feverous citadel:  
 For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes, 85  
 Hvena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,  
 Whose very dogs would execration howl  
 Against his lineage: not one breast affords  
 Him any mercy in that mansion foul,  
 Save one o'd beldame, weak in body and in soul. 90

## XI

Ah, happy chance! The aged creature came,  
 Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,  
 To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,  
 Behind a broad hall pillar, far beyond  
 The sound of merriment and chorus bland. 95  
 He startled her: but soon she knew his face,  
 And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,  
 Saying, 'Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;  
 They are all here tonight, the whole blood-thirsty  
 race!

## XII

'Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hilde-  
 brand: 100

He had a fever late, and in the fit  
 He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:

Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit  
 More tame for his grey hairs—Alas me! flit!  
 Flit like a ghost away.'—'Ah, Gossip dear, 105  
 We're safe enough: here in this arm-chair sit,  
 And tell me how'—'Good saints! not here, not here;  
 Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.'

## XIII

He followed through a lowly archèd way,  
 Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume; 110  
 And as she muttered 'Well-a—well-a-day!'  
 He found him in a little moonlight room,  
 Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb  
 'Now tell me where is Madeline,' said he,  
 'O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom 115  
 Which none but secret sisterhood may see,  
 When they St Agnes' wool are weaving piously.'

## XIV

'St Agnes! Ah! it is St Agnes' Eve—  
 Yet men will murder upon holy days.  
 Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve, 120  
 And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays  
 To venture so! it fills me with amaze  
 To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve! "  
 'God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays  
 This very night: good angels her deceive! 125  
 But let me laugh awhile,—I've mickle time to grieve.'

## XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,  
 While Porphyro upon her face doth look,  
 Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone  
 Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book, 130  
 As spectaclèd she sits in chimney nook.  
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told  
 His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook  
 Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,  
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old. 135

## xvi

Sudden a thought came like 'a full-blown rose,  
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart  
 Made purple riot: then doth he propose  
 A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:  
 'A cruel man and impious thou art: 140  
 Sweet lady! let her pray, and sleep and dream  
 Alone with her good angels, far apart  
 From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I deem  
 Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst  
 'seem.'

## xvii

'I will not harm her, by all saints I swear!' 145  
 Quoth Porphyro: 'O may I ne'er find grace  
 When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,  
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,  
 Or look with ruffian passion in her face.  
 Good Angela, believe me, by these tears; 150  
 Or I will, even in a moment's space,  
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,  
 And beard them, though they be more fanged than  
 wolves and bears.'

## xviii

'Ah! wilt thou affright a feeble soul?  
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing, 155  
 Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;  
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,  
 Were never missed.' Thus plaining, doth she bring  
 A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;  
 So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing, 160  
 That Angela gives promise she will do  
 Whatever he shall wish, beside her weak or woe.

155. **churchyard thing**: creature as good as dead and buried

156. **passing-bell**: bell tolling to announce a person dying.

## XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,  
 Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide  
 Him in a closet, of such privacy 165  
 That he might see her beauty unespied,  
 And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,  
 While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,  
 And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.  
 (Never on such a night have lovers met, 170  
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

## XX

'It shall be as thou wishest,' said the Dame:  
 'All cates and dainties shall be stored there  
 Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame  
 Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare, 175  
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare  
 On such a catering trust my dizzy head.  
 Wait here, my child, with patience kneel in prayer  
 The while. Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,  
 Or may I never leave my grave among the dead.' 180

## XXI

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.  
 The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;  
 The dame returned, and whispered in his ear  
 To follow her; with aged eyes aghast  
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at last 185  
 Through many a dusky gallery, they gain  
 The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed and chaste;  
 Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.  
 His poor guide hurried back with 'agues in her brain.

## XXII

Her faltering hand upon the balustrade, 190  
 Old Angela was feeling for the stair,  
 When Madeline, St Agnes' charmed maid,  
 Rose, like a missioned spirit, unware:

---

174. **tambour frame**: circular frame on which material is stretched for embroidering. 189. **agues**: terrified agitation. 193. **missioned**: charged with a mission.



With silver taper's light, and pious care,  
 She turned, and down the aged gossip led 195  
 To a safe level matting. Now prepare,  
 Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;  
 She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and  
 fled.

## XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;  
 Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died: 200  
 She closed the door, she panted, all alone  
 To spirits of the air, and visions wide:  
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!  
 But to her heart, her heart was voluble,  
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side; 205  
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell  
 Her throat in vain and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.)

## XXIV

A casement high and triple-arched there was,  
 All garlanded with carven imageries,  
 Of fruits and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass, 210  
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,  
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,  
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;  
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,  
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings, 215  
 A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens  
 and kings.

## XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,  
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,  
 As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;  
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest, 220  
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,  
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:  
 She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,  
 Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:  
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint. 225

198. frayed : frightened. 212. Innumerable of : with innumerable.  
 213. deep-damasked : deep red. 218. gules : red (term in heraldry).  
 221. soft amethyst : light violet.



## XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,  
 Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;  
 Uncclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;  
 Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees  
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees: 230  
 Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,  
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,  
 In fancy, fair St Agnes in her bed,  
 But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

## XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest, 235  
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,  
 Until the poppièd warmth of sleep oppressed  
 Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;  
 (Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;  
 Blissfully havened both from joy and pain; 240  
 Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;  
 Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,  
 As though a rose should shut and be a bud again.)

## XXVIII

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,  
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress, 245  
 And listened to her breathing, if it chanced  
 To wake into a slumberous tenderness;  
 Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,  
 And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,  
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness, 250  
 And over the hushed carpet, silent, stept,  
 And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo!—how  
 fast she slept!

## XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon  
 Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set  
 A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon 255  
 A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—

---

237. **poppièd**: sleep-inducing. 241. **missal**: Roman Catholic prayer-book. **swart Paynims**: dark-skinned pagans.

O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!  
 The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,  
 The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,  
 Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:— 260  
 The half-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

## XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,  
 In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavendered,  
 While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
 Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd; 265  
 With jellies soother than the creamy curd,  
 And lucent-syrups, tinct with cinnamon;  
 Manna and dates, in argosy transferred  
 From Fez; and spicèd dainties, every one,  
 From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon. 270

## XXXI

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand  
 On golden dishes and in baskets bright  
 Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand  
 In the retirèd quiet of the night,  
 Filling the chilly room with perfume light.— 275  
 'And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!  
 Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:  
 Open thine eyes, for meek St Agnes' sake,  
 Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.'

## XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm 280  
 Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream  
 By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm  
 Impossible to melt as icèd stream:  
 The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;  
 Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies: 285  
 It seemed he never, never could redeem  
 From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;  
 So mused awhile, entoièd in woofèd phantasies.

---

257. **Morphean amulet**: sleep-producing charm (Morpheus, god of dreams). 260. **Affray**: frighten. 262. **azure-lidded**: under blue-veined eyelids. 266. **soother**: softer. 267. **tinct**: flavoured. 271. **delicates**: delicacies. 288. **woofed**: woven.

## XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—  
 Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be, 290  
 He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,  
 In Provence called 'La belle dame sans mercy':  
 Close to her ear touching the melody;—  
 Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan:  
 He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly 295  
 Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone:  
 Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured  
 stone.

## XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,  
 Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:  
 There was a painful change, that nigh expelled 300  
 The blisses of her dream so pure and deep.  
 At which fair Madeline began to weep,  
 And moan forth witless words with many a sigh,  
 While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;  
 Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye, 305  
 Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

## XXXV

'Ah, Porphyro!' said she, 'but even now  
 Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,  
 Made tunable with every sweetest vow;  
 And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear: 310  
 How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!  
 Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,  
 Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!  
 Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,  
 For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go'. 315

## XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far  
 At these voluptuous accents, he arose,  
 Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star  
 Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;

296 affrayèd : frightened. 310 spiritual : full of spirit (opposite of 'spintless').

Into her dream he melted, as the rose 320  
 Blendeth its odour with the violet,—  
 Plution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows  
 Like Love's alarum, pattering the sharp sleet  
 Against the window-panes; St Agnes' moon hath set.

## XXXVII

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet. 325  
 'This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!'—  
 'Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:  
 'No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!  
 Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—  
 Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring? 330  
 I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,  
 Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—  
 A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing.'

## XXXVIII

'My, Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!  
 Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest? 335  
 Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil-dyed?  
 Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest  
 After so many hours of toil and quest,  
 A famished pilgrim,—saved by miracle.  
 Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest, 340  
 Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well  
 To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

## XXXIX

'Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,  
 Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:  
 Arise—arise! the morning is at hand,— 345  
 The bloated wassailers will never heed;—  
 Let us away, my love, with happy speed;  
 There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—  
 Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead.  
 Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be, 350  
 For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.'

322. Solution: mixture 336 vermeil: vermilion. 344. haggard: wild 349. Rhenish: kind of wine.

## XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,  
 For there were sleeping dragons all around  
 At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears.  
 Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found; 355  
 In all the house\* was heard no human sound.  
 A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;  
 The arras, rich with horsemen, hawk, and hound,  
 Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;  
 And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor. 360

## XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall!  
 Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,  
 Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,  
 With a huge empty flagon by his side:  
 The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide, 365  
 But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:  
 By one, and one, the belts full easy slide:—  
 The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;  
 The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

## XLII

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago 370  
 These lovers fled away into the storm.  
 That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,  
 And all his warrior-guests with shade and form  
 Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,  
 Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old 375  
 Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;  
 The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,  
 For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

---

376. deform : deformed. 377. aves : prayers to the Virgin Mary.



Already with thee! tender is the night, 35  
 And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,  
 Clustered around by all her starry Fays;  
 But, here there is no light,  
 Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown  
 Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy  
 ways. 40

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,  
 Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,  
 But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet  
 Wherewith the seasonable month endows 45  
 The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;  
 White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;  
 Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves;  
 And mid-May's eldest child,  
 The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,  
 The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves. 50

Darkling I listen; and for many a time  
 I have been half in love with easeful Death,  
 Called him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,  
 To take into the air my quiet breath;  
 Now more than ever seems it rich to die, 55  
 To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
 While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
 In such an ecstasy!  
 Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—  
 To thy high requiem become a sod. 60

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!  
 No hungry generations tread thee down;  
 The voice I hear this passing night was heard  
 In ancient days by emperor and clown:  
 Perhaps the self-same song that found a path 65  
 Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,  
 She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
 The same that oft-times hath  
 Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam  
 Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn. 70

42. incense : scented flower    43. sweet : sweet-smelling flower  
 64. clown : peasant.



Forlorn! the very word is like a bell  
 To toll me back from thee to my sole self.  
 Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well  
 As she is fabled to do, deceiving elf,  
 Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades 75  
 Past the near meadows, over the still stream.  
 Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep  
 In the next valley-glades:  
 Was it a vision, or a waking dream?  
 Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep? 80

### *The Lotos-Eaters*

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed toward the land,  
 'This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.'  
 In the afternoon they came unto a land  
 In which it seemed always afternoon.  
 All round the coast the languid air did swoon, 5  
 Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
 Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;  
 And like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
 Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.  
 A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke, 10  
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;  
 And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,  
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.  
 They saw the gleaming river seaward flow  
 From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops, 15  
 Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
 Stood sunset-flushed: and, dewed with showery drops,  
 Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse,  
 The charmed sunset lingered low adown  
 In the red West: thro' mountain clefts the dale 20  
 Was seen far inland, and the yellow down  
 Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale  
 And meadow, set with slender galingale;

18. Up-clomb: up-climbed (poetical form) woven: tangled

19 charmed: (as though) under a magic spell



A land where all things always seemed the same!  
 And round about the keel with faces pale, 25  
 Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.  
 Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,  
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave  
 To each, but whoso did receive of them, 30  
 And taste, to him the gushing of the wave  
 Far far away did seem to mourn and rave  
 On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,  
 His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;  
 And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake, 35  
 And music in his ears his beating heart did make.  
 They sat them down upon the yellow sand,  
 Between the sun and moon upon the shore;  
 And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,  
 Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore 40  
 Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,  
 Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.  
 Then some one said, 'We will return no more';  
 And all at once they sang, 'Our island home  
 Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam.' 45

## CHORIC SONG

## I

There is sweet music here that softer falls  
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
 Or night-dews on still waters between walls  
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies, 50  
 Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;  
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful  
 skies.  
 Here are cool mosses deep,        v  
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
 And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep, 55  
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,  
 And utterly consumed with sharp distress,  
 While all things else have rest from weariness?  
 All things have rest: why should we toil alone, 60  
 We only toil, who are the first of things,  
 And make perpetual moan,  
 Still from one sorrow to another thrown:  
 Nor ever fold our wings,  
 And cease from wanderings, 65  
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;  
 Nor hearken what the inner spirit sings,  
 'There is no joy but calm!'  
 Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood, 70  
 The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud  
 With winds upon the branch, and there  
 Grows green and broad, and takes no care,  
 Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon  
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow 75  
 Falls, and floats adown the air.  
 Lo! sweetened with the summer light,  
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over mellow,  
 Drops in the silent autumn night.  
 All its allotted length of days, 80  
 The flower ripens in its place,  
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,  
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 85  
 Death is the end of life; ah, why  
 Should life all labour be?  
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,  
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
 Let us alone. What is it that will last? 90

All things are taken from us, and become  
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.  
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have  
 To war with evil? Is there any peace  
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave? 95  
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave  
 In silence; ripen, fall and cease:  
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful  
 ease.

## V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,  
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem 100  
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,  
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;  
 To hear each other's whispered speech;  
 Eating the Lotos day by day, 105  
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,  
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray;  
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly  
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;  
 To muse and brood and live again in memory, 110  
 With those old faces of our infancy  
 Heaped over with a mound of grass,  
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

## VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,  
 And dear the last embraces of our wives 115  
 And their warm tears: but all hath suffered change;  
 For surely now our household hearths are cold:  
 Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:  
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.  
 Or else the island princes over-bold 120  
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings  
 Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,  
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.  
 Is there confusion in the little isle?

Let what is broken so remain. 125  
 The Gods are hard to reconcile:  
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
 There is confusion worse than death, ,  
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
 Long labour unto aged breath, 130  
 Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars  
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

## VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,  
 How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)  
 With half-dropt eyelids still, 135  
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
 To watch the long bright river, drawing slowly  
 His waters from the purple hill—  
 To hear the dewy echoes calling  
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-twinèd vine— 140  
 To watch the emerald-coloured water falling  
 Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!  
 Only to hear and see the 'far-off sparkling brine,  
 Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

## VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak: 145  
 The Lotos blows by every winding creek:  
 All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:  
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
 Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-  
 dust is blown.  
 We have had enough of action, and of motion we. 150  
 Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge  
 was seething free,  
 Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-  
 fountains in the sea.  
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,  
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined  
 On the hills like Gods together, careless of man-  
 kind. 155

---

132. **pilot-stars** : stars that guide ships at night. 149. **Lotos-dust** : lotos pollen.

For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts, are  
hurled  
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly  
curled ,  
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming  
world: †  
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring  
deeps and fiery sands, 160  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships,  
and praying hands.  
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful<sup>est</sup>  
song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of  
wrong,  
Like a tale of little<sup>e</sup> meaning tho' the words are strong;  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the  
soil, 165  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and  
oil:  
Till they perish and they suffer— some, 'tis whispered  
—down in hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell.  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel. 170  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the  
shore  
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave  
and oar;  
Oh, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

156. bolts : thunderbolts. 158. the gleaming world : the bright sky. 170. asphodel : flower of Elysium.

FROM 'IN MEMORIAM'

FAIR ship, that from the Italian shore  
Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain; a favourable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, 'before the prow:  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,  
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
 , Till all my widow'd race be run;  
 Dear as the mother to the son,  
 More than my brothers are to me.

I hear the noise about thy keel;  
I hear the bell struck in the night;  
I see the cabin-window bright;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign lands;  
And letters unto trembling hands;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

8. **floods** : seas urn : coffin. 10. **Phosphor** : Lucifer, the morning star. 13. **Sphere** : display in the hemisphere. 18. **widow'd** : bereaved. race : course of life. 28. **dark** : gloomy, sorrowful.

So bring him: we have idle dreams:  
 This look of quiet flatters thus 30  
 Our home-bred fancies: O to us,  
 The fools, of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains 35  
 The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;  
 And hands so often clasp'd in mine,  
 Should toss with tangle and with shells. 40

## III

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
 Calm as to suit A calmer griet,  
 And only thro' the faded leaf  
 The chestnut pattering to the ground: :  
 Calm and deep peace on this high wold, 45  
 And on these dews that drench the furze,  
 And all the silvery gossamers  
 That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
 That sweeps with all its autumn bowers, 50  
 And crowded farms and lessening towers,  
 To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
 These leaves that redden to the fall;  
 And in my heart, if calm at all, 55  
 If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
 And waves that sway themselves in rest.  
 And dead calm in that noble breast  
 Which heaves but with the heaving deep. 60

\* \* \* \*

37 wells : depths of the sea. 40. tangle : seaweed. 52. bounding main : sea which bounds the view.



## IV •

Tonight the winds begin to rise  
 And roar from yonder dropping day:  
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
 The rooks are blown about the skies,

The forest crack'd; the waters cur'd, 65  
 The cattle huddled on the lea;  
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree  
 The sunbeam strikes along the world.

And but for fancies, which aever  
 That all thy motions gently pass 70  
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;  
 And but for fear it is not so,  
 The wild unrest that lives in woe 75  
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
 And onward drags a labouring breast,  
 And topples round the dreary west,  
 A looming bastion fringed with fire 80

## V

What words are these have fall'n from me?  
 Can calm despair and wild unrest  
 Be tenants of a single breast,  
 Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take 85  
 The touch of change in calm or storm;  
 But knows no more of transient form  
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven? 90  
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,  
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

---

84 **changeling** : changed thing (like a fairy child substituted for a human).

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
 And staggers blindly ere she sink?  
 And stunn'd me from my power to think 95  
 And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me 'that delirious man  
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
 And flashes into false and true,  
 And mingles all without a plan? 100

## VI

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze  
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer  
 Was as the whisper of an air  
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move 105  
 Thro' circles of the bounding sky,  
 Week after week: the days go by:  
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,  
 My blessing, like a line of light, 110  
 Is on the waters day and night,  
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
 Mid-ocean; spare thee, sacred bark;  
 And balmy drops in summer dark 115  
 Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
 Such precious relics brought by thee;  
 The dust of him I shall not see  
 Till all my widow'd race be run. 120

## VII

'Tis well; 'tis something, we may stand  
 Where he in English earth is laid,  
 And from his ashes may be made  
 The violet of his native land.

# LORD TENNYSON

131

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth  
 As if the quiet bones were blest  
 Among familiar names to rest  
 And in the places of his youth. .

125

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head  
 That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,  
 And come, whatever loves to weep,  
 And hear the ritual of the dead.

130

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
 I, falling on his faithful heart,  
 Would breathing thro' his lips impart  
 The life that almost dies in me ;

135

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
 And slowly forms the firmer mind,  
 Treasuring the look it cannot find,  
 The words that are not heard again.

140

## VIII

The Danube to the Severn gave  
 The darken'd heart that beat no more ;  
 They laid him by the pleasant shore,  
 And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;  
 The salt sea-water passes by.  
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,  
 And makes a silence in the hills.

145

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
 And hush'd my deepest grief of all,  
 When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,  
 I brim with sorrow drowning song.

150

The tide flows down, the wave again  
 Is vocal in its wooded walls ;  
 My deeper anguish also falls,  
 And I can speak a little then.

155

*The Last Ride Together*

## I

I SAID,—Then, Dearest, since 'tis so,  
 Since now at length my fate I know,  
 Since nothing all my love avails,  
 Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails.

Since this was written and needs must be— 5  
 My whole heart rises up to bless  
 Your name in pride and thankfulness!  
 Take back the hope you gave,—I claim  
 Only the memory of the same,  
 —And this beside, if you will not blame, 10  
 Your leave for one more last ride with me.

## II

My mistress' bent that brow of hers:  
 Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs  
 When pity would be softening through,  
 Fixed me a breathing-while or two 15

With life or death in the balance: right!  
 The blood replenished me again;  
 My last thought was at least not vain;  
 I and my mistress, side by side  
 Shall be together, breathe and ride, 20  
 So one day more am I deified—

Who knows but the world may end tonight.

## III

Hush! if you saw some western cloud  
 All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed  
 By many benedictions—sun's 25  
 And moon's and evening-star's at once—

And so, you, looking and loving best,  
 Conscious grew, your pansion drew  
 Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,  
 Down on you, near and yet more near. 30  
 Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—  
 Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!  
 Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

5. written : destined    21. deified : made equal to the gods in bliss.

## IV

Then we began to ride. My soul  
Smoothed itself out—a long-cramped scroll 35  
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.  
Past hopes already lay behind.

What need to strive with a life awry?  
Had I said that, had I done this,  
So might I gain, so might I miss. 40  
Might she have loved me? just as well  
She might have hated,—who can tell?  
Where had I been now if the worst befell?  
And here we are riding, she and I.

## V

Fail I alone, in words and deeds? 45  
Why, all men strive and who succeeds?  
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,  
Saw other regions, cities new,

As the world rushed by on either side.  
I thought,—All labour, yet no less 50

Bear up beneath their unsuccess.  
Look at the end of work, contrast  
The petty Done, the Undone vast,  
This Present of theirs with the hopeful Past!  
I hoped she would love me: here we ride. 55

## VI

What hand and brain went ever paired?  
What heart alike conceived and dared?  
What act proved all its thought had been?  
What will but felt the fleshly screen?

We ride and I see her bosom heave. 60  
There's many a crown for who can reach.  
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!

The flag stuck on a heap of bones,  
A soldier's doing! what atones?  
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones. 65  
My riding is better, by their leave.

56. paired : matched ; equal to each other. 59. fleshly screen : obstruction of the body. 61. crown : reward.

## VII

What does it all mean, poet? well,  
 Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell  
 What 'we felt only; you expressed  
 You hold things beautiful the best, 70  
 And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.  
 'Tis something, nay 'tis much—but then,  
 Have you yourself what's best for men?  
 Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—  
 Nearer one whit your own sublime 75  
 Than we who never have turned a rhyme?  
 Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

## VIII

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave  
 A score of years to Art, her slave,  
 And that's your Venus—whence we turn 80  
 To yonder girl that fords the burn!  
 You acquiesce, and shall I repine?  
 What, man of music, you, grown grey  
 With notes and nothing else to say  
 Is this your sole praise from a friend, 85  
 'Greatly his opera's strains intend,  
 But in music we know how fashions end!  
 I gave my youth—but we ride, in fine.

## IX

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate  
 Proposed bliss here should sublimiate 90  
 My being; had I signed the bond—  
 Still one must lead some life beyond,  
 —Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.  
 This foot once planted on the goal,  
 This glory-garland round my soul, 95  
 Could I descry such? Try and test!  
 I sink back shuddering from the quest—  
 Earth being so good, would Heaven seem best?  
 Now, Heaven and she are beyond this ride.

68 beat into rhythm : express in verse 75 sublime : lofty ideal.  
 90. here : in the present life sublimiate : raise to supreme height.  
 91. bond : contract with fate

## X

And yet—she has not spoke so long! 100  
 What if Heaven be that, fair and strong  
 At life's best, with our eyes upturned  
 Whither life's flower is first discerned,  
 We, fixed so, ever should so abide?  
 What if we still ride on, we two, 105  
 With life for ever old yet new,  
 Changed not in kind but in degree,  
 The instant made eternity,—  
 And Heaven just prove that I and she  
 Ride, ride together, for ever ride? 110

*Rabbi Ben Ezra*

GROW old along with me!  
 The best is yet to be,  
 The last of life; for which the first was made:  
 Our times are in His hand  
 Who saith 'A whole I planned, 5  
 Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!

## II

Not that, amassing flowers,  
 Youth sighed 'Which rose make ours.  
 Which lily leave and then as best recall?'  
 Not that, admiring stars, 10  
 It yearned 'Nor Jove, nor Mars;  
 Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends  
 them all!'

## III

Not for such hopes and fears  
 Annulling youth's brief years,  
 Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark! 15

Rather I prize the doubt  
 Low kinds exist without,  
 Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

## IV

Poor vaunt of life indeed,  
 Were man but formed to feed 20  
 On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:  
 Such feasting ended, then  
 As sure an end to men;  
 Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-  
 crammed beast?

## V

Rejoice we are allied 25  
 To That which doth provide  
 And not partake, effect and not receive!  
 A spark disturbs our clod;  
 Nearer we hold of God  
 Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe. 30

## VI

Then, welcome each rebuff  
 That turns earth's smoothness rough,  
 Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!  
 Be our joys three-parts pain!  
 Strive, and hold cheap the strain; 35  
 Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

## VII

For thence,—a paradox  
 Which comforts while it mocks,—  
 Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:  
 What I aspired to be, 40  
 And was not, comforts me:  
 A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the  
 scale.

---

26 That : God. 29 hold of : are allied to. 30. tribes : species of creatures. 36. 'account : take any account of.



## viii

What is he but a brute  
 Whose flesh hath soul to suit,  
 Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play? 45  
 To man, propose this test—  
 Thy body at its best,  
 How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?)

## ix

Yet gifts should prove their use:  
 I own the Past profuse 50  
 Of power each side, perfection every turn:  
 Eyes, ears took in their dole,  
 Brain treasured up the whole;  
 Should not the heart beat once 'How good to live and  
 learn?'

## x

Not once beat 'Praise be Thine! 55  
 I see the whole design,  
 I, who saw Power, see now Love perfect too:  
 Perfect I call Thy plan:  
 Thanks that I, was a man!  
 Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt do!' 60

## xi

For pleasant is this flesh;  
 Our soul in its rose-mesh  
 Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:  
 Would we some prize might hold  
 To match those manifold 65  
 Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

## xii

Let us not always say  
 'Spite of this flesh today  
 I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'  
 As the bird wings and sings, 70  
 Let us cry 'All good things  
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps  
 soul!'

## XIII

Therefore I summon age  
 To grant youth's heritage,  
 Life's struggle having so far reached its term: 75  
 Thence shall I pass, approved  
 A man, for aye removed  
 From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

## XIV

And I shall thereupon  
 Take rest, ere I be gone 80  
 Once more on my adventure brave and new:  
 Fearless and unperplexed,  
 When I wage battle next,  
 What weapons to select, what armour to indue

## XV

( Youth ended, I shall try 85  
 My gain or loss thereby:  
 Be the fire ashes, what survives is gold.  
 And I shall weigh the same,  
 Give life its praise or blame:  
 Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old. ) 90

## XVI

For note, when evening shuts,  
 A certain moment cuts  
 The deed off, calls the glory from the grey:  
 A whisper from the west  
 Shoots—'Add this to the rest, 95  
 Take it and try its worth: here dies another day.'

## XVII

So, still within this life,  
 Though lifted o'er its strife,  
 Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,  
 'This rage was right i' the main, 100  
 That acquiescence vain:  
 The Future I may face now I have proved the Past.'

## xviii

For more is not reserved  
 To man, with soul just nerved  
 To act tomorrow what he learns today. 105  
 Here, work enough to watch  
 The Master work, and catch  
 Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

## xix

As it was better, youth  
 Should strive, through acts uncouth, 110  
 Toward making, than repose on aught found made;  
 So, better, age, exempt  
 From strife, should know, than tempt  
 Further. Thou waitedst age; wait, death nor be afraid!

## xx

Enough now, if the Right 115  
 And Good and Infinite  
 Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,  
 With knowledge absolute,  
 Subject to no dispute  
 From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone. 120

## xxi

Be there, for once and all,  
 Severed great minds from small,  
 Announced to each his station in the Past!  
 Was I, the world arraigned,  
 Were they, my soul disdained, 125  
 Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

## xxii

Now, who shall arbitrate?  
 Ten men love what I hate,  
 Shun what I follow, slight what I receive,  
 Ten, who in ears and eyes 130  
 Match me: we all surmise  
 They, this thing, and I, that: whom shall my soul believe?

## XXIII

Not on the vulgar mass  
 Called 'work', must sentence pass,  
 Things done, that took the eye and had the price; 135  
 O'er which, from level stand,  
 The low world laid its hand,  
 Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

## XXIV

But all, the world's coarse thumb  
 And finger failed to plumb, 140  
 So passed in making up the main account;  
 All instincts immature,  
 All purposes unsure,  
 That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's  
 amount:

## XXV

Thoughts hardly to be packed 145  
 Into a narrow act,  
 Fancies that broke through language and escaped;  
 All I could never be,  
 All, men ignored in me,  
 This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher  
 shaped. 150

## XXVI

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,  
 That metaphor! and feel  
 Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—  
 Thou, to whom fools propound.  
 When the wine makes its round, 155  
 'Since life fleets, all is change; the past gone, seize today!'

## XXVII

Fool! All that is, at all,  
 Lasts ever, past recall;  
 Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:  
 What entered into thee, 160  
*That* was, is, and shall be:  
 Time's wheel runs back or stops; Potter and clay endure.

## XXVIII

He fixed thee mid this dance  
 Of plastic circumstance,  
 This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest: 165  
 Machinery just meant  
 To give thy soul its bent,  
 Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

## XXIX

What though the earlier grooves  
 Which ran the laughing loves 170  
 Around thy base, no longer pause and press?  
 What though, about thy rim,  
 Skull-things in order grim  
 Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

## XXX

Look not thou down but up! 175  
 To uses of a cup,  
 The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,  
 The new wine's foaming flow,  
 The Master's lips aglow!  
 Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with 180  
 earth's wheel?

## XXXI

But I need, now as then,  
 Thee, God, who moulded men,  
 And since, not even while the whirl was worst,  
 Did I,—to the wheel of life  
 With shapes and colours rife, 185  
 Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

## XXXII

So, take and use Thy work!  
 Amend what flaws may lurk,  
 What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!  
 My times be in Thy hand! 190  
 Perfect the cup as planned!  
 Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

164. *plastic* : which moulds the soul 163. *impressed* : stamped into shape 170 *ran* : made run 189 *past* : wide of

*The Scholar Gipsy*

Go, for they call you, Shepherd, from the hill;  
 Go, Shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes:  
 No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,  
 Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,  
 Nor the cropped grasses shoot another head. 5  
 But when the fields are still,  
 And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,  
 And only the white sheep are sometimes seen  
 Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanchèd green;  
 Come, Shepherd, and again renew the quest. 10

Here, where the reaper was at work of late,  
 In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves  
 His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,  
 And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,  
 Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use; 15  
 Here will I sit and wait,  
 While to my ear from uplands far away  
 The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,  
 With distant cries of reapers in the corn—  
 All the live murmur of a summer's day. 20

Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped field,  
 And here till sun-down, Shepherd, will I be.  
 Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,  
 And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see  
 Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils creep: 25  
 And air-swept lindens yield  
 Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers  
 Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,  
 And bower me from the August sun with shade;  
 And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers: 30

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book—  
 Come let me read the oft-read tale again,  
 The story of that Oxford scholar poor  
 Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,  
 Who, tired of knocking at Preferment's door, 35  
 One summer morn forsook

His friends, and went to learn the Gipsy lore,  
 And roamed the world with that wild brotherhood,  
 And came, as most men deemed, to little good,  
 But came to Oxford and his friends no more. 40

But once, years after, in the country lands,  
 Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,  
 Met him, and of his way of life inquired.  
 Whereat he answered, that the Gipsy crew,  
 His mates, had arts to rule as they desired 45  
 The workings of men's brains;  
 And they can bind them to what thoughts they will:  
 'And I,' he said, 'the secret of their art,  
 When fully learned, will to the world impart:  
 But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill.' 50

This said, he left them, and returned no more,  
 But rumours hung about the country-side,  
 That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,  
 Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,  
 In hat of antique shape, and cloak of grey, 55  
 The same the Gipsies wore.

Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;  
 At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,  
 On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frocked boors  
 Had found him seated at their entering, 60

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly:  
 And I myself seem half to know thy looks,  
 And put the shepherds, Wanderer, on thy trace;  
 And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks  
 I ask if thou hast passed their quiet place; 65

Or in my boat I lie  
 Moored to the cool bank in the summer heats,  
 'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,  
 And watch the warm green-muffled Cumner hills.  
 And wonder if thou hauntest their shy retreats. 70

For most, I know, thou lov'st retirèd ground.  
 Thee, at the ferry, Oxford riders blithe,  
 Returning home on summer nights, have met  
 Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablock-hithe,

Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet, 75  
 As the slow punt swings round:  
 And leaning backwards in a pensive dream,  
 And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers  
 Plucked in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,  
 And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream: 80

And then they land, and thou art seen no more.  
 Maidens who from the distant hamlets come  
 To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,  
 Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,  
 Or cross a stile into the public way. 85  
 Oft thou hast given them store  
 Of flowers—the frail-leafed, white anemone—  
 Dark bluebells drenched with dew of summer eves,  
 And purple orchises with spotted leaves—  
 But none has words she can report of thee. 90

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here  
 In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,  
 Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass  
 Where black-winged swallows haunt the glittering  
 Thames,  
 To bathe in the abandoned lasher pass. 95  
 Have often passed thee near  
 Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown:  
 Marked thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,  
 Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air;  
 But, when they came from bathing, thou wert gone. 100

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,  
 Where at her open door the housewife darns.  
 Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate  
 To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.  
 Children, who early range these slopes and late 105  
 For cresses from the rills,  
 Have known thee watching, all an April day,  
 The springing pastures and the feeding kine;  
 And marked thee, when the stars come out and shine,  
 Through the long dewy grass move slow away. 110



In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley wood,  
 Where most the Gipsies by the turf-edged way  
 Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see  
 With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of grey,  
 Above the forest-ground called Thessaly— 115  
 The blackbird picking food  
 Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;  
 So often has he known thee past him stray  
 Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered spray,  
 And waiting for the spark from Heaven to fall. 120

And once, in winter, on the causéway chill  
 Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,  
 Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge  
 Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,  
 Thy face towards Hinksey and its wintry ridge? 125  
 And thou hast climbed the hill  
 And gained the white brow of the Cumner range;  
 Turned once to watch, while thick the snow-flakes fall,  
 The line of festal light in Christ Church hall—  
 Then sought thy straw in some sequestered grange. 130

But what—I dream! Two hundred years are flown  
 Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,  
 And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe  
 That thou wert wandered from the studious walls  
 To learn strange arts, and join a Gipsy tribe: 135  
 And thou from earth art gone  
 Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid;  
 Some country nook, where o'er thy unknown grave  
 Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave—  
 Under a dark red-fruited yew tree's shade. 140

—No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours.  
 For what wears out the life of mortal men?  
 'Tis that from change to change their being rolls:  
 'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,  
 Exhaust the energy of strongest souls, 145  
 And numb the elastic powers,  
 Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,

And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,  
 To the just-pausing Genius we remit  
 Our worn-out life, and are—what we have been. 150

(Thou hast no lived, why should'st thou perish, so?  
 Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire :  
 Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead—  
 Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire.)  
 The generations of thy peers are fled, 155

And we ourselves shall go ;  
 But thou possessest an' immortal lot,  
 And we imagine thee exempt from age  
 And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,  
 Because thou hadst—what we, alas, have not! 160

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers  
 Fresh, undiverted to the world without,  
 Firm to their mark, not spent on other things ;  
 Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,  
 Which much to have tried, in much been baffled,  
 brings. 165

O Life unlike to ours!  
 Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,  
 Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives.  
 And each half lives a hundred different lives ;  
 Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope. 170

Thou waitest for the spark from Heaven: and we,  
 Vague half-believers of our casual creeds,  
 Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,  
 Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds  
 Whose weak resolves never have been fulfilled; 175

For whom each year we see  
 Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new ;  
 Who hesitate and falter life away,  
 And lose tomorrow the ground won today—  
 Ah, do not we, Wanderer, await it too? 180

Yes, we await it, but it still delays,  
 And then we suffer; ~~and~~ <sup>amongst</sup> us one,  
 Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly

His seat upon the intellectual throne;  
 And all his store of sad experience he 185  
 Lays bare of wretched days;  
 Tells us his misery's birth and growth, and signs,  
 And how the dying spark of hope was fed,  
 And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,  
 And all his hourly varied anodynes. 190

This for our wisest: and we others pine,  
 And wish the long unhappy dream would end,  
 And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear,  
 With close-lipped Patience for our only friend,  
 Sad Patience, too near neighbour to Despair: 195  
 But none has hope like thine.  
 Thou through the fields and through the woods dost  
 stray,  
 Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,  
 Nursing thy project in unclouded joy.  
 And every doubt long blown by time away. 200

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,  
 And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;  
 Before this strange disease of modern life,  
 With its sick hurry, its divided aims,  
 Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was rife— 205  
 Fly hence, our contact fear!  
 Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood  
 Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern  
 From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,  
 Wave us away, and keep thy solitude. 210

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,  
 Still clutching the inviolable shade,  
 With a free onward impulse brushing through,  
 By night, the silvered branches of the glade—  
 Far on the forest skirts, where none pursue, 215  
 On some mild pastoral slope  
 Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales,  
 Freshen thy flowers, as in former years,

---

194. close-lipped : firmly keeping silence. 207. bowering :  
 embowering. 217. pales : fence •

With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,  
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales. 220

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!  
For strong the infection of our mental strife,  
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;  
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,  
Like us distracted, and like us unblest. 225

Soon, soon thy cheer would die,  
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy powers,  
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made:  
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,  
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours. 230

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!  
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,  
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow  
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,  
The fringes of a southward-facing brow 235

Among the Ægean isles;  
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,  
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,  
Green bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in brine;  
And knew the intruders on his ancient home, 240

The young light-hearted Masters of the waves;  
And snatched his rudder, and shook out more sail,  
And day and night held on indignantly  
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,  
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily, 245

To where the Atlantic raves  
Outside the Western Straits, and unbent sails  
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of  
foam,  
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;  
And on the beach undid his corded bales. 250

---

226. cheer : cheerfulness. 228. cross : turned to one side. 237. coaster : coasting vessel. 238. Chian : of Chios (Ægean island). 244. Midland waters : the Mediterranean sea. 245. the Syrtes : North African bay. 249. Iberians : earliest inhabitants of Spain.

*The Haystack in the Floods*

HAD she come all the way for this,  
 To part at last without a kiss?  
 Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain  
 That her own eyes might see him slain  
 Beside the haystack in the floods? 5

Along the dripping leafless woods,  
 The stirrup touching either shoe,  
 She rode astride as troopers do;  
 With kirtle kilted to her knee,  
 To which the mud splash'd wretchedly; 10  
 And the wet dripp'd from every tree  
 Upon her head and heavy hair,  
 And on her eyelids broad and fair;  
 The tears and rain ran down her face.

By fits and starts they rode apace, 15  
 And very often was his place  
 Far off from her; he had to ride  
 Ahead, to see what might betide  
 When the roads cross'd; and sometimes, when  
 There rose a murmuring from his men, 20  
 Had to turn back with promises;  
 Ah me! she had but little ease;  
 And often for pure doubt and dread  
 She sobb'd, made giddy in the head  
 By the swift riding; while, for cold, 25  
 Her slender fingers scarce could hold  
 The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,  
 She felt the foot within her shoe  
 Against the stirrup: all for this,  
 To part at last without a kiss 30  
 Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they near'd that old soak'd hay,  
 They saw across the only way  
 That Judas, Godmer, and the thrée  
 Red running lions dismally 35

Grinn'd from his pennon, under which,  
In one straight line along the ditch,  
They counted thirty heads.

So then,  
While Robert turn'd round to his men,  
She saw at once the wretched end, 40  
And, stooping down, tried hard to rend  
Her coif the wrong way from her head,  
And hid her eyes; while Robert said:  
'Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one,  
At Poitiers where we made them run 45  
So fast—why, sweet my love, good cheer,  
The Gascon frontier is so near,  
Nought after this.'

But, 'O,' she said,  
'My God! my God! I have to tread  
The long way back without you; then 50  
The court at Paris; those six men;  
The gratings of the Chatelet;  
The swift Seine on some rainy day  
Like this, and people standing by,  
And laughing, while my weak hands try 55  
To recollect how strong men swim.  
All this, or else a life with him,  
For which I should be damned at last,  
Would God that this next hour were past!'

He answer'd not, but cried his cry, 60  
'St George for Marny!' cheerily;  
And laid his hand upon her rein.  
Alas! no man of all his train  
Gave back that cheery cry again;  
And, while for rage his thumb beat fast 65  
Upon his sword-hilts, some one cast  
About his neck a kerchief long,  
And bound him.

Then they went along  
To Godmar; who said: 'Now, Jehane,  
Your lover's life is on the wane. 70

So fast, that, if this very hour  
 You yield not as my paramour,  
 He will not see the rain leave off—  
 Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,  
 Sir Robert, or I slay you now.''

75

She laid her hand upon her brow,  
 Then gazed upon the palm, as though  
 She thought her forehead bled, and—'No',  
 She said, and turn'd her head away,  
 As there were nothing else to say, 80  
 And everything were settled: red  
 Grew Godmar's face from chin to head:  
 'Jehane, on yonder hill there stands  
 My castle, guarding well my lands:  
 What hinders me from taking you, 85  
 And doing that I list to do  
 To your fair wilful body, while  
 Your knight lies dead?'

A wicked smile  
 Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,  
 A long way out she thrust her chin: 90  
 'You know that I should strangle you  
 While you were sleeping; or bite through  
 Your throat, by God's help—ah!' she said,  
 'Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!  
 For in such wise they hem me in, 95  
 I cannot choose but sin and sin,  
 Whatever happens: yet I think  
 They could not make me eat or drink,  
 And so should I just reach my rest.'  
 'Nay, if you do not my behest, 100  
 O Jehane! though I love you well,  
 Said Godmar, 'would I fail to tell  
 All that I know.' 'Foul lies,' she said.  
 'Eh? lies, my Jehane? by God's head.  
 At Paris folks would deem them true! 105  
 Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you,  
 "Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!"



Give us Jehane to burn or drown!"—  
 Eh—gag me Robert!—sweet my friend,  
 This were indeed a piteous end 110  
 For those long fingers, and long feet,  
 And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;  
 An end that few men would forget  
 That saw it—So, an hour yet:  
 Consider, Jehane, which to take 115  
 Of life or death!"

So, scarce awake,  
 Dismounting, did she leave that place,  
 And totter some yards: with her face  
 Turn'd upward to the sky she lay,  
 Her head on a wet heap of hay, 120  
 And fell asleep: and while she slept,  
 And did not dream, the minutes crept  
 Round to the twelve again; but she,  
 Being waked at last, sigh'd quietly,  
 And strangely childlike came, and said: 125  
 'I will not.' Straightway Godmar's head,  
 As though it hung on strong wires, turn'd  
 Most sharply round, and his face burn'd.

For Robert—both his eyes were dry,  
 He could not weep, but gloomily 130  
 He seem'd to watch the rain; yea, too,  
 His lips were firm; he tried once more  
 To touch her lips; she reach'd out, sore  
 And vain desire so tortured them,  
 The poor grey lips, and now the hem 135  
 Of his sleeve brush'd them.

With a start  
 Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;  
 From Robert's throat he loosed the bands  
 Of silk and mail; with empty hands  
 Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw, 140  
 The long bright blade without a flaw.  
 Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand  
 In Robert's hair; she saw him bend  
 Back Robert's head; she saw him send



ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE 153

The thin steel down ; the blow told well, 145  
Right backward the knight Robert fell,  
And moan'd as dogs do, being half dead,  
Unwitting, as I deem: so then  
Godmar turn'd grinning to his men,  
Who ran, some five or six, and beat 150  
His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turn'd again and said:  
'So Jehane, the first fitte is read! .  
Take note, my lady, that your way  
Lies backward to the Chatelet!' 155  
She shook her head and gazed awhile  
At her cold hands with a rueful smile,  
As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had  
Besides the haystack in the floods. 160

### *In a Forsaken Garden*

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,  
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,  
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,  
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.  
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses 5  
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed .  
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of  
its roses  
Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,  
To the low last edge of the long lone land. 10  
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,  
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?  
So long have the grey bare walks lain guestless,  
Through branches and briars if a man make way,  
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless 15  
Night and day.

153. fitte : section of a poem (archaic). 1. coign : corner.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled  
 That crawls by a track none turn to climb  
 To the strait waste place that the years have rifled  
 Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time. 20  
 The thorns he spares, when the rose is taken;  
 The rocks are left when he wastes the plain.  
 The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,  
 These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not; 25  
 As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;  
 From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not,  
 Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.  
 Over the meadows that blossom and wither  
 Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song; 30  
 Only the sun and the rain come hither  
 All year long.

The sun burns sere and the rain dishevels  
 One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.  
 Only the wind here hovers and revels 35  
 In a round where life seems barren as death.  
 Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,  
 Haply, of lovers none ever will know,  
 Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping  
 Years ago. 40

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, 'Look thither,'  
 Did he whisper? 'look forth from the flowers to the sea;  
 For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms  
 wither,  
 And men that love lightly may die—but we?'  
 And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened, 45  
 And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,  
 In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,  
 Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?  
 And were one to the end—but what end who knows? 50  
 Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,  
 As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.

Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?

What love was ever as deep as a grave?

They are loveless now as the grass above them 55  
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,

Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.

Not a breath of the time that has been hovers

In the air now soft with a summer to be. 60

Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter

Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,

When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter

We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again for ever; 65

Here change may come not till all change end.

From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,

Who have left nought living to ravage and rend.

Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,

While the sun and the rain live, these shall be; 70

Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing

Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,

Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,

Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble 75

The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,

Here now in his triumph where all things falter,

Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,

As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,

Death lies dead. 80

### *'There is a hill beside the silver Thames'*

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,

Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine:

And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems

Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

Straight trees in every place 5

Their thick tops interlace,

And pendant branches trail their foliage fine

Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows:  
 His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade, 10  
 Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes  
 Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.  
 His winter floods lay bare  
 The stout roots in the air:  
 His summer streams are cool, when they have played 15  
 Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,  
 And hides it from the meadow, where in peace  
 The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,  
 Robbing the golden market of the bees: 20  
 And laden barges float  
 By banks of myosote;  
 And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys  
 Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool 25  
 Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass  
 The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,  
 And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass;  
 Where spreading crowfoot mars  
 The drowning nenuphars, 30  
 Waving the tassels of her silken grass  
 Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,  
 Not the white water-lily spoked with gold;  
 Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows 35  
 On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold:  
 Yet should her roots but try  
 Within these deeps to lie,  
 Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold  
 Her waxen head so high. 40

---

17. **rushy**: full of rushes. 20. **the golden market**: the honey.  
 23. **flag**: iris. **flower-de-lys**: fleur-de-lis 26. **Eddies away**: ends in  
 an eddy. 32. **stars**: star-shaped flowers. 34. **spoked with gold**.  
 with golden bars like spokes. 36 **shields**: leaves protecting the  
 blossoms.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook  
Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree  
Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,  
Forgetting soon his pride of fishery ;

And dreams, or falls asleep,

45

While curious fishes peep  
About his nibbled bait, or scornfully  
Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,  
In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care  
Upon a staff propping his weary knees,  
May by the pathway of the forest fare :

50

As from a buried day

Across the mind will stray .

Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware  
He passeth on his way.

55

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,  
Whether he bathe at morning in the stream :  
Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe  
The meadows, busy with a blurring steam ;  
Or watch, as fades the light,  
The gibbous moon grow bright,  
Until her magic rays dance in a dream,  
And glorify the night.

60

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames?  
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow !  
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,  
No sharer of my secret I allow :

65

Lest ere I come the while

Strange feet your shades defile ;

70

Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow  
Within your guardian isle.

*Wordsworth's Grave*

## I

THE old rude church, with bare, bald tower, is here;  
 Beneath its shadow high-born Rotha flows;  
 Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near,  
 And with "cool murmur lulling his repose.

Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near. 5  
 His hills, his lakes, his streams are with him yet.  
 Surely the heart that read her own heart clear  
 Nature forgets not soon: 'tis we forget.

We that with vagrant soul his fixity  
 Have slighted; faithless, done his deep faith  
 wrong, 6 10  
 Left him for poorer loves, and bowed the knee  
 To misbegotten strange new gods of song.

Yet, led by hollow ghost or beckoning elf,  
 Far from her homestead to the desert bourn,  
 The vagrant soul returning to herself 15  
 Wearily wise, must needs to him return.

To him and to the powers that with him dwell:—  
 Inflowings that divulged not whence they came;  
 And that secluded spirit unknowable,  
 The mystery we make darker with a name; 20

The Somewhat which we name but cannot know,  
 Ev'n as we name a star and only see  
 His quenchless flashings forth, which ever show  
 And ever hide him, and which<sup>f</sup> are not he.

## II

Poet who sleepest by this wandering wave! 25  
 When thou wast born, what birth-gift hadst  
 thou then?

To thee what wealth was ~~that~~ the Immortals gave,  
 The wealth thou gavest in thy turn to men?

---

2 high-born : rising in the mountains.

Not Milton's keen, translunar music tnone;  
 Not Shakespeare's cloudless, boundless human  
 view;  
 Not Shelley's flush of rose on peaks divine;  
 Nor yet the wizard twilight Coleridge knew. 30

What hadst thou that could make so large amends  
 For all thou hadst not and thy peers possessed,  
 Motion and fire, swift means to radiant ends?— 35  
 Thou hadst, for weary feet, the gift of rest.

From Shelley's dazzling glow or thunderous haze,  
 From Byron's tempest-anger, tempest-mirth,  
 Men turned to thee and found—not blast and blaze,  
 Tumult of tottering heavens, but peace on earth. 40

Nor peace that grows by Lethe, scentless flower,  
 There in white languors to decline and cease,  
 But peace whose names are also rapture, power,  
 Clear sight, and love: for these are parts of peace.

## III

I hear it vouched the Muse is with us still;— 45  
 If less divinely frenzied than of yore,  
 In lieu of feelings she has wondrous skill  
 To simulate emotion felt no more.

Not such the authentic Presence pure, that made  
 This valley vocal in the great days gone!— 50  
 In *his* great days, while yet the spring-time played  
 About him, and the mighty morning shone.

No word-mosaic artificer, he sang  
 A lofty song of lowly weal and dole.  
 Right from the heart, right to the heart it sprang, 55  
 Or from the soul leapt instant to the soul.

He left the charm of childhood, grace of youth,  
 Grandeur of age, insisting to be sung.  
 The impassioned argument was simple truth  
 Half-wondering at its own melodious tongue. 60



Impassioned? ay, to the song's ecstatic core!  
 But far removed were clangour, storm and feud;  
 For plenteous health was his, exceeding store  
 Of joy, and an impassioned quietude.

IV

A hundred years ere he to manhood came, 65  
 Song from celestial heights had wandered down,  
 Put off her robe of sunlight, dew and flame,  
 And donned a modish dress to charm the Town,

Thenceforth she but festooned the porch of things;  
 Apt at life's lore, incurious what life meant. 70  
 Dextrous of hand, she struck her lute's few strings;  
 Ignobly perfect, barrenly content.

Unflushed with ardour and unblanched with awe,  
 Her lips in profitless derision curled,  
 She saw with dull emotion—if she saw— 75  
 The vision of the glory of the world.

The human masque she watched, with dreamless eyes  
 In whose clear shallows lurked no trembling shade:  
 The stars, unkennered by her, might set and rise,  
 Unmarked by her, the daisies bloom and fade.

The age grew sated with her sterile wit.  
 Herself waxed weary on her loveless throne.  
 Men felt life's tide, the sweep and surge of it,  
 'And craved a living voice, a natural tone.

For none the less, though song was but half true, 85  
 The world lay common, one abounding theme.  
 Man joyed and wept, and fate was ever new,  
 And love was sweet, life real, death no dream.

In sad stern verse the rugged scholar-sage  
 Bemoaned his toil unvalued, youth uncheered. 90  
 His numbers wore the vesture of the age,  
 But, 'neath it beating, the great heart was heard.

---

66. Song : poetry. 77. human masque : spectacle of human life.  
 dreamless : matter-of-fact, without vision. 86, common : open to  
 all



From dewy pastures, uplands sweet with thyme,

A virgin breeze freshened the jaded day.

It wafted Collins' lonely vesper-chime,

95

It breathed abroad the frugal note of Gray.

It fluttered here and there, nor swept in vain

The dusty haunts where futile echoes dwell,—

Then, in a cadence soft as summer rain,

And sad from Auburn voiceless, drooped and fell. 100

It drooped and fell, and one 'neath northern skies,

With southern heart, who tilled his father's field,

Found Poesy a-dying, bade her rise

And touch quick Nature's hem and go forth healed.

On life's broad plain the ploughman's conquering  
share

105

Upturned the fallow lands of truth anew,

And o'er the formal garden's trim parterre

The peasant's team a ruthless furrow drew.

Bright was his going forth, but clouds ere long

Wheimed him; in gloom his radiance set, and those 110

Twin morning stars of the new century's song,

Those morning stars that sang together, rose.

In elvish speech the *Dreamer* told his tale

Of marvellous oceans swept by fateful wings.—

The *Seer* strayed not from earth's human pale,

115

But the mysterious face of common things

He mirrored as the moon in Rydal Mere

Is mirrored, when the breathless night hangs blue:

Strangely remote she seems and wondrous near,

And by some nameless difference born anew.

120

V

Peace—peace—and rest! Ah, how the lyre is loth,

Or powerless now, to give what all men seek!

Either it deadens with ignoble sloth

Or deafens with shrill tumult, loudly weak.

Where is the singer whose large notes and clear 125  
 Can heal and arm and plenish and sustain?  
 Lo, one with empty music floods the ear,  
 And one, the heart refreshing, tires the brain.

And idly tuneful, the loquacious throng  
 Flutter and twitter, prodigal of time, 130  
 And little masters make a toy of song  
 Till grave men weary of the sound of rhyme.

And some go pranked in faded antique dress,  
 Abhorring to be half and glad and free;  
 And some parade a conscious naturalness, 135  
 The scholar's not the child's simplicity.

Enough:—and wisest who from words forbear  
 The kindly river rails not as it glides;  
 And suave and charitable, the winning air  
 Chides not at all, or only him who chides. 140

## VI

Nature! we storm thine ear with choric notes  
 Thou answerest through the calm great nights and  
 days.

'Laud me who will: not tuneless are your throats;  
 Yet if ye paused I should not miss the praise.'

We falter, half-rebuked, and sing again. 145  
 We chant thy desertness and haggard gloom,  
 Or with thy splendid wrath inflate the strain,  
 Or touch it with thy colour and perfume.

One, his melodious blood aflame for thee,  
 Wooed with fierce lust, his hot heart world-defiled. 150  
 One, with the upward eye of infancy,  
 Looked in thy face, and felt himself thy child.

Thee he approached without distrust or dread—  
 Beheld thee throned, an awful queen, above—  
 Climbed to thy lap and merely laid his head 155  
 Against thy warm wild heart of mother-love.

He heard that vast heart beating—thou didst press  
 Thy child so close, and lov'dst him unaware.  
 Thy beauty gladdened him; yet he scarce less  
 Had loved thee, had he never found thee fair! 160

For thou wast not as legendary lands  
 To which with curious eyes and ears we roam.  
 Nor wast thou as a fane 'mid solemn sands,  
 Where palmers halt at evening. Thou wast home.

And here, at home, still bides he; but he sleeps; 165  
 Not to be wakened even at thy word;  
 Though we, vague dreamers, dream he somewhere  
 keeps  
 An ear still open to thy voice still heard,—

Thy voice, as heretofore, about him blown,  
 For ever blown about his silence now; 170  
 Thy voice, though deeper, yet so like his own  
 That almost, when he sang, we deemed 'twas thou!

VII

Behind Helm Crag and Silver Howe the sheen  
 Of the retreating day is less and less.  
 Soon will the lordlier summits, here unseen, 175  
 Gather the night about their nakedness.

The half-heard bleat of sheep comes from the hill.  
 Faint sounds of childish play are in the air.  
 The river murmurs past. All else is still.  
 The very graves seem stiller than they were. 180 •

Afar though nation be on nation hurled,  
 And life with toil and ancient pain depressed,  
 Here one may scarce believe the whole wide world  
 Is not at peace, and all man's heart at rest.

Rest! 'twas the gift *he* gave; and peace! the shade 185  
*He* spread, for spirits fevered with the sun.  
 To him his bounties are come back—here laid  
 In rest, in peace, his labour nobly done.

*The Hound of Heaven*

I FLED Him, down the nights and down the days;  
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
 Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter. 5  
     Up vistaed hopes, I sped;  
     And shot, precipitated,  
 Adown titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,  
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.  
     But with unhurrying chase, 10  
     And unperturbèd pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
     They beat—and a Voice beat  
     More instant than the Feet—  
 ‘All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.’ 15  
     I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
 By many a hearted casement, curtained red,  
     Trellised with intertwining charities;  
 (For, though I knew His love Who followèd,  
     Yet was I sore adread 20  
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside);  
 But, if one little casement parted wide,  
     The gust of His approach would clash it to.  
     Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
 Across the margent of the world I fled, 25  
     And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,  
     Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;  
     Fretted to dulcet jars  
 And silvern chatter the pale ports o’ the moon.  
     I said to dawn: Be sudden; to eve: Be soon— 30  
     With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over  
     From this tremendous Lover!  
 Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!  
     I tempted all His servitors, but to find

6. *vistaed*: like *vistas*. 8. *chasmèd*: like *chasms*. 17. *hearted*: of the heart. 20. *adread*: terrified. 24. *wist*: knew. 25. *margent*: margin. 27. *clangèd*: resounding. 28. *jars*: vibration. 29. *silvern*: (silvery), ringing. *ports*: gates.

My own betrayal in their constancy, 35  
 In faith to Him their fickleness to me,  
 Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.

To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;  
 Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.  
 But whether they swept, smoothly fleet, 40  
 The long savannahs of the blue;  
 Or whether, Thunder-driven,  
 They clanged His chariot 'thwart æ heaven,  
 Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their  
 feet:—

Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue. 45  
 Still with unhurrying chase,  
 And unperturbèd pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
 Came on the following Feet,  
 And a Voice above their beat— 50  
 'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

I sought no more that after which I strayed  
 In face of man or maid;  
 But still within the little children's eyes  
 Seems something, something that replies, 55  
*They* at least are for me, surely for me!  
 I turned me to them very wistfully;  
 But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair  
 With dawning answers there,  
 Their angel plucked them from me by the hair. 60  
 'Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share  
 With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;  
 Let me greet you lip to lip,  
 Let me twine with you caresses,  
 Wantoning 65  
 With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,  
 Banqueting  
 With her in her wind-walled palace,  
 Underneath her azured daïs,  
 Quaffing, as your taintless way is, 70  
 From a chalice

43. *clanged* : drove with clanging sound. 44. *Plashy* : splashed. •  
 66. *our Lady-Mother* : Nature.

Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.'

So it was done:

*I* in their delicate fellowship was one—

Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.

75

*I* knew all the swift importings

On the wilful face of skies;

*I* knew how the clouds arise,

Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;

All that's born or dies

80

Rose and drooped with; made them shapers  
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine—

With them joyed and was bereaven.

*I* was heavy with the even,

When she lit her glimmering tapers

85

Round the day's dead sanctities.

*I* laughed in the morning's eyes.

*I* triumphed and *I* saddened with all weather,

Heaven and *I* wept together,

And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;

90

Against the red throb of its sunset-heart

*I* laid my own to beat,

And share commingling heat;

But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.

In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's grey cheek.

95

For ah! we know not what each other says,

These things and *I*; in sound *I* speak—

*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.

Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;

Let her, if she would owe me,

100

Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me

The breasts o' her tenderness:

Never did any milk of hers once bless

My thirsting mouth.

Nigh and nigh draws the chase,

105

With unperturbed pace,

Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,

And past those noised Feet

A Voice comes yet more fleet—

---

72. *Lucent-weeping*: shedding sparkling tears. 76. *importings*: significances. 79. *Spumèd*: foamed forth. 82. *divine*: divinely happy. 100. *owe*: own. 108. *noised*: announced by their noise.

'Lo ! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.' 110

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!

My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,

And smitten me to my knee;

I am defenceless utterly.

I slept, methinks, and woke, 115

And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.

In the rash lustihead of my young powers,

I shook the pillaring hours

And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,

I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years— 120

My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.

My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,

Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Yea, faileth now even dream

The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist; 125

Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist

I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,

Are yielding; cords of all too weak account

For earth, with heavy griefs so overplussed.

Ah! is Thy love indeed 130

A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,

Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?

Ah! must—

Designer infinite!—

Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn  
with it? 135

My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;

And now my heart is as a broken fount,

Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever

From the dank thoughts that shiver

Upon the sighful branches of my mind. 140

Such is; what is to be?

The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?

I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds

From the hid battlements of Eternity: 145

117. *lustihead* : vigour. 123. *sun-starts* : momentary flashes of sunlight. 129. *overplussed* : filled to excess. 131. *amaranthine* : imperishable. 143. *confounds* : renders confused and indistinct.



Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
 Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again;  
 But not ere him who summoneth  
 I first have seen, enwound  
 With glooming robes purpuræal, cypress-crowned; 150  
 His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.  
 Whether man's heart or life it be which yields  
 Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields  
 Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit 155  
 Comes on 'at hand the bruit;  
 That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:  
 'And is thy earth so marred,  
 Shattered in shard on shard?  
 Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me! 160  
 Strange, piteous, futile thing,  
 Wherefore should any set thee love apart?  
 Seeing none but I makes much of naught' (He said),  
 'And human love needs human meriting:  
 How hast thou merited— 165  
 Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?  
 Alack, thou knowest not  
 How little worthy of any love thou art!  
 Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
 Save Me, save only Me? 170  
 All which I took from thee I did but take,  
 Not for thy harms,  
 But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.  
 All which thy child's mistake  
 'Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home; 175  
 Rise, clasp My hand, and come.'

Halts by me that footfall:  
 Is my gloom, after all,  
 Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
 'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, 180  
 I am He Whom thou seekest!  
 Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

---

146. **unsettle** : lift. disperse. 154. **dunged** : made fertile. 156  
**bruit** : noise. 159. **shard** : earthen fragment 162. **thee** : for thee.



*Flannan Isle*

'THOUGH three men dwell on Flannan Isle  
To keep the lamp alight, •  
As we steer'd under the lee, we caught  
No glimmer through the night.' •

A passing ship at dawn had brought 5  
The news; and quickly we set sail, •  
To find out what strange thing might ail  
The keepers of the deep-sea light.

The winter day broke blue and bright, 10  
With glancing sun and glancing spray,  
As o'er the swell our boat made way.  
As gallant as a gull in flight.

But, as we near'd the lonely Isle;  
And look'd up at the naked height;  
And saw the lighthouse towering white, 15  
With blinded lantern, that all night  
Had never shot a spark  
Of comfort through the dark,  
So ghostly in the cold sunlight  
It seem'd, that we were struck the while 20  
• With wonder all too dread for words.

And, as into the tiny creek  
We stole beneath the hanging crag,  
We saw three queer, black, ugly birds—  
Too big, by far, in my belief, 25  
For guillemot or shag—  
Like seamen sitting bolt-upright  
Upon a half-tide reef:  
But, as we near'd, they plunged from sight,  
Without a sound, or spurt of white. 30

And still too amazed to speak,  
We landed; and made fast the boat;  
And climb'd the track in single file, •  
Each wishing he was safe afloat, •  
On any sea, however far, 35  
So it be far from Flannan Isle: •

And still we seem'd to climb, and climb,  
As though we'd lost all count of time,  
And so must climb for evermore.  
Yet, all too soon, we reached the door— 40  
The black, sur-blister'd lighthouse-door,  
That gaped for us ajar.

As, on the threshold, for a spell,  
We paused, we seem'd to breathe the smell  
Of limewash and of tar, 45  
Familiar as our daily breath,  
As though 'twere some strange scent of death:  
And so, yet wondering, side by side,  
We stood a moment, still tongue-tied:  
And each with black foreboding eyed 50  
The door, ere' we should fling it wide,  
To leave the sunlight for the gloom:  
Till, plucking courage up, at last,  
Hard on each other's heels we pass'd  
Into the living-room. 55

Yet, as we crowded through the door,  
We only saw a table, spread  
For dinner, meat and cheese and bread;  
But all untouch'd; and no one there:  
As though, when they sat down to eat, 60  
Ere thy could even taste,  
Alarm had come; and they in haste  
Had risen and left the bread and meat:  
For at the table-head a chair  
Lay tumbled on the floor. 65

We listen'd; but we only heard  
The feeble cheeping of a bird  
That starved upon its perch:  
And, listening still, without a word,  
We set about our hopeless search. 70

We hunted high, we hunted low;  
And soon ransack'd the empty house;  
Then o'er the Island, to and fro,  
We ranged, to listen and to look

---

45. limewash : lime and water for washing walls.

In every cranny, cleft or nook 75  
That might have hid a bird or mouse:  
But, though we search'd from shore to shore,  
We found no sign in any place:  
And soon again stood face to face  
Before the gaping door: 80  
And stole into the room once more  
As frighten'd children steal.

Aye: though we hunted high and low,  
And hunted everywhere,  
Of the three men's fate we found no trace 85  
Of any kind in any place,  
But a door ajar, and an untouch'd meal,  
And an overtoppled chair.

And, as we listen'd in the gloom'  
Of that forsaken living-room— 90  
A chill clutch on our breath—  
We thought how ill-chance came to all  
Who kept the Flannan Light:  
And how the rock had been the death  
Of many a likely lad: 95

How six had come to a sudden end,  
And three had gone stark mad:  
And one whom we'd all known as friend  
Had leapt, from the lantern, one still night,  
And fallen dead by the lighthouse wall: 100  
And long we thought  
On the three we sought,  
And of what might yet befall.  
Like curs, a glance has brought to heel,  
We listen'd, flinching there: 105  
And look'd, and look'd, on the untouch'd meal,  
And the overtoppled chair.

We seem'd to stand for an endless while,  
Though still no word was said,  
Three men alive on Flannan Isle, 110  
Who thought, on three men dead.

*The Great Lover*

I have been so great a lover: filled my days  
 So proudly with the splendour of Love's praise,  
 The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,  
 Desire illimitable, and still content,  
 And all dear names men use, to cheat despair, 5  
 For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear  
 Our hearts at random down the dark of life.  
 Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife  
 Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,  
 My night shall be remembered for a star 10  
 That outshone all the suns of all men's days.  
 Shall I not crown them with immortal praise  
 Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me  
 High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see  
 The inenarrable godhead of delight? 15  
 Love is a flame:—we have beaconed the world's night.  
 A city:—and we have built it, these and I.  
 An emperor:—we have taught the world to die.  
 So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,  
 And the high cause of Love's magnificence, 20  
 And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names  
 Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames;  
 And set them as a banner, that men may know,  
 To dare the generations, burn and blow  
 Out on the wind of Time, shining and streaming . . . . 25

These I have loved:

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,  
 Kinged with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;  
 Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust  
 Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;  
 Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood; 30  
 And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;  
 And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,  
 Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon,  
 Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon

---

4. still: quiet. 15. inenarrable: indescribable. 16. beaconed:  
 lit up as by a beacon. 24. dare: challenge. 32. sway: wave to  
 and fro.

Smooth away trouble ; and the rough male kiss 35  
 Of blankets ; grainy wood ; live hair that is  
 Shining and free ; blue-massing clouds ; the keen  
 Unpassioned beauty of a great machine ;  
 The benison of hot water } furs to touch ;  
 The good smell of old clothes ; and other such— 40  
 The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,  
 Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers  
 About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .

Dear names,

And thousand other throng to me !. Royal flames ;  
 Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring ; 45  
 Holes in the ground ; and voices that do sing ;  
 Voices in laughter, too ; and body's pain,  
 Soon turned to peace ; and the deep-panting train ;  
 Firm sands ; the little dulling edge of foam  
 That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home ; 50  
 And washen stones, gay for an hour ; the cold  
 Graveness of iron ; moist black earthen mould ;  
 Sleep ; and high places ; footprints in the dew ;  
 And oaks ; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new ;  
 And new-peeled sticks ; and shining pools on grass ;— 55  
 All these have been my loves. And these shall pass,  
 Whatever passes not, in the great hour,  
 Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power  
 To hold them with me through the gate of Death.  
 They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath, 60  
 Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust  
 And sacramented covenant to the dust.  
 —Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,  
 And give what's left of love again, and make  
 New friends, now strangers. . . .

But the best I've known 65

Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown  
 About the winds of the world, and fades from brains  
 Of living men, and dies.

Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again  
 This one last gift I give: that after men 70

Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed,  
Praise you, 'All these were lovely' ; say, 'He loved'.

### *Strange Meeting*

It seemed that out of battle I escaped  
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped  
Through granite's which 'titanic wars had groined.  
Yet also there encumbered sleepers groaned,  
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred. 5  
Then, as I probed them, one sprang up, and stared  
With piteous recognition in fixed eyes,  
Lifting distressful hands 'as if to bless.  
And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall,  
By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell. 10  
With a thousand pains that vision's face was grained ;  
Yet no blood reached there from the upper ground.  
And no guns thumped, or down the flues made moan.  
'Strange friend,' I said, 'here is no cause to mourn.'  
'None,' said the other, 'save the undone years, 15  
The hopelessness. Whatever hope is yours,  
Was my life also ; I went hunting wild  
After the wildest beauty in the world,  
Which lies not calm in eyes, or braided hair,  
But mocks the steady running of the hour, 20  
And if it grieves, grieves richlier than here.  
For by my glee might many men have laughed,  
And of my weeping something had been left,  
Which must die now. I mean the truth untold,  
The pity of war, the pity war distilled. 25  
Now men will go content with what we spoiled.  
Or, discontent, boil bloody, and be spilled.  
They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress, •  
None will break ranks, though nations trek from  
progress.

---

3. *groined* : formed into vaults. 11. *grained* : marked with lines like the grain in wood. 13. *flues* : air-channels. 15. *undone* : ruined. 27. *discontent* : discontented *spilled* : slain

Courage was mine, and I had mystery,  
Wisdom was mine, and I had mastery:  
To miss the march of this retreating world  
Into vain citadels that are not walled.  
Then, when much blood had clogged their chariot-  
wheels

I would go up and wash them from sweet wells, 35  
Even with truths that lie too deep for taint.  
I would have poured my spirit without stint  
But not through wounds; not on the cess of war.  
Foreheads of men have bled where no wounds were.  
I am the enemy you killed, my friend.  
I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned  
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.  
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold.  
Let us sleep now. . . .





## NOTES

### JOHN MILTON (1608-74)

John Milton, usually regarded as one of the very greatest of English poets, is in disfavour with many present-day critics. The 'grand style', for which he is famous, they accuse of empty pomposity and monotonous sonority. But the grandiloquence and unfamiliarity of much of his diction is suited to the grandeur and remoteness of his themes; and when the occasion demands it, he can write in language of noble simplicity. In either mode the sense of beauty never deserts Milton, and it is impossible to deny his artistic command of language, metre and melody.

His early work included an *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, a pair of poems descriptive of life in the country (*L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*), a Mask (*Comus*), and the Elegy (*Lycidas*), here selected. After more than twenty years of poetic silence except for a handful of sonnets, Milton wrote his great epic, *Paradise Lost*—from which the description of Eden is here taken—a briefer epic, *Paradise Regained*, and a drama after the Greek model, *Samson Agonistes*. All these later poems are based on the Bible. Milton was at once a Renaissance scholar and lover of beauty, and a man of the Reformation. Even in the early poems both sides of him are evident, as in *Lycidas*, where his Puritanism comes out in the tirade against unworthy clergy (ll. 113—31).

#### *Lycidas*

This poem was originally published in 1638 as one of a number of poems commemorating the premature death of Edward King, Fellow of Milton's own College, Christ's, Cambridge, who was drowned while crossing from England to Ireland, in August, 1637.

The modern reader's appreciation of this masterpiece will be impaired unless he can understand and allow for two conventions. The first is that of the pastoral elegy, a highly artificial form of poem, which descended to Milton from Greek poets of the 3rd and 1st centuries B.C., through the Roman poet, Vergil, and less well-known Italian poets.

Shelley later wrote his elegy on Keats (*Adonais*) in the same traditional form. In this, not only is the imagery of the shepherd's life employed throughout, but certain traditional features recur—e.g. the expostulatory question addressed to some higher power (*Lyc.* 50 ff.; *Adon.* 10-14); the laments of Nature for the dead (*Lyc.* 39-43; *Adon.* 118-44); and the procession of mourners (*Lyc.* 88-109; *Adon.* 262-315). The complete reversal of tone, from grief to joy, in the final portion (*Lyc.* 165-end) is a new feature introduced by Milton, and copied, in a less clearly marked manner, by Shelley (*Adon.* 334-end).

Secondly, *Lycidas* is not only, like most of Milton's poems, steeped in classical allusions, but allows itself what to the modern reader is a rather incongruous mingling of pagan mythology with Christian religious ideas. It needs to be understood that to poets and scholars of the Renaissance, like Milton, the combination was not only a convention prescribed by precedent, but had become a perfectly natural habit.

The poem is written in iambic ten-syllabled lines, varied occasionally (ll. 4, 19, 21, etc.) by shorter lines of six syllables. The lines rhyme at perpetually varied intervals, though there are a number of rhyming couplets; but there are also eight unrhymed lines (13, 22, 39, 51, 82, 91, 92, 161).

1-5 The poet apologizes for again attempting poetry before his powers are mature. The imagery is of plucking leaves and berries to make a poetic wreath for himself, laurels, ivy and myrtle being all associated with poetry in Greek and Latin authors. Milton, though now aged 29, had written little or no poetry since *Comus* in 1634.

10-11 Edward King aspired to be a poet and had written verses both in Latin and English. *Knew to sing* and *build the rhyme* are reproductions of Latin construction and idiom.

15. *sisters*: the Muses. *the sacred well*: the fountain Aganippe on Mt Helicon, sacred to the Muses. Near it was an altar to Zeus (*seat of Jove*).

20 *my destined urn* my funeral, whenever I am destined to die. The ancient Greeks and Romans cremated the body, and buried the ashes enclosed in an urn.

22. *my sable shroud*: metaphorical of the darkness of death which will cover him. 'Me in my death' is the meaning.

23-36. describe in pastoral imagery their life together in Christ's College, and their writing of poetry (32-3).

32-3. *oaten flute*: the shepherd's pipe, made from oaten stalks; in 88 shortened to *oat*. In pastoral poetry it traditionally stood for

poetry, as the shepherd did for the poet. (cf. Shelley's *mountain shepherds*—*Adon.* 262).

34-6. Damætas is supposed to stand for one of the Christ's College tutors. But whom the satyrs and fauns represent is not clear. In Roman mythology they are woodland beings with half human, half goat-like forms.

50. *nymphs* the Muses of 15.

52-5. Places near the Irish Sea, where the shipwreck occurred, are mentioned Chester, from which King set sail, stands on the river Dee *The steep*, probably Penmaenmawr in N. Wales

58 ff. Orpheus was a legendary Greek musician who was torn in pieces by frenzied women worshippers of Bacchus, the god of wine, in one of their drunken revels. His head was thrown into the river Hebrus in Thrace, from which it floated out to sea and was washed up again on the island of Lesbos. Orpheus' mother was Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry

67-9 Variouslly interpreted as the pursuit of love and pleasure, or the writing of frivolous and erotic instead of serious and noble poetry. The contrast in 72 supports the former. In the poem's imagery Amaryllis and Neæra will be shepherdesses, as Damætas a shepherd. The names come from Vergil's pastoral poems

70 *Spirit* is the object of *raise*, not the subject

75 In Greek mythology three goddesses of Fate controlled each human life—the first, Clotho, spinning a thread, the second, Lachesis weaving a web from it, and the third, Atropos, bringing life to an end by cutting the thread. Milton here seems to confuse these Fates with the Furies, the goddesses of retribution

77 *Rhæbus* (Apollo) is here as the god of song. He is also the sun-god.

79-80 'Nor consists in a brilliant display for the whole world to see' cf. *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, 133-50

*Foil*, usually the dullish metal leaf on which a jewel is placed to set it off, is here some shining metal displayed (*set off*) for the sake of its own brightness

85-8. Milton apologizes for the tone of the preceding as too elevated for the pastoral mode. He expresses this idea by mythological allusions. Alpheus, the chief river in S. Greece, was reputed to pass under the sea and rise again in the fountain Arethusa in an island off the coast of Sicily. In poetry this became a myth of the love of a youth for a maiden. Arethusa here and Alpheus in 132 stand for pastoral poetry because associated with Theocritus, the father of pastoral poetry, a Sicilian poet of the third century B.C. Mincius, a river near Mantua, is associated with Vergil, whose Eclogues are pastoral poems, because Vergil was born in Mantua. Hence *crowned with vocal reeds*.

89. *the herald of the sea*: Triton, son of Neptune, god of the sea. Half human, half fish in form, he blew a shell, (Wordsworth's 'wreathed horn').

96 *Hippotades*: Aeolus, god of the winds, who kept them in a cave (*his dungeon*) to ensure calm weather.

99. *Panope*: one of the fifty Nereids or sea-nymphs

100 *bark*: the ship in which King was drowned.

103 *Camus*: Latinizing the name of the Cam, Milton invents a river-god to stand for the University of Cambridge.

106. *that sanguine flower*: the *hyakinthos*, whose petals had markings like the Greek *ai ai* ('alas, alas'). This was supposed to show the grief of Apollo for the beautiful boy Hyakinthos, accidentally killed by a quoit thrown by Apollo, from whose blood sprang this flower (hence *sanguine*). The English 'hyacinth', though it has borrowed the name, is a different plant and has no such marks.

109. The Apostle Peter.

110-11. See the *Gospel of Matthew*, xvi. 19.

112. *mitred*: the mitre is the headdress of a bishop. Peter, according to tradition, was the first Bishop of Rome.

113-31. The pastoral imagery acquires a new, a religious, significance. The clergyman is the shepherd of his congregation, or 'flock'. The 'songs' are now sermons, not poems.

119. *Blind mouths*: a magnificently compressed image for unspiritual greed. See Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, Lecture I—'A bishop means a person who sees. A pastor means a person who feeds. The most unbishoply character a man can have is therefore to be Blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed—to be a Mouth.'

128-9. This signifies the success of Roman Catholic teachers in winning converts from the Anglican Church.

130-1. The image appears to be of a great axe, requiring both hands to wield it. What exactly the image stands for is disputed.

133. The shrinking of the water of Alpheus symbolizes the unsuitability of religious polemic to pastoral poetry, the stream standing for the latter (see note on 85-8).

138. 'Rarely visited by extreme heat' is the meaning. *The swart star* is the Dog-Star, Sirius, supposed in Greece to cause intense heat, because visible above the horizon only at the hottest time of the year.

149. *amaranthus*. the Greek name of an unidentified flower. The name means 'fadeless', 'imperishable', the word being cognate with the Sanskrit *amrita*.

156. *Hebrides*: islands off the west coast of Scotland.

160-2 i.e. his body may be lying near the Cornish coast. *Bellerus old*. a Cornish giant invented by Milton from the Latin name for Cornwall, Bellerium. *The guarded Mount*: St Michael's Mount, in Cornwall. The archangel Michael was said to have appeared here as the guardian angel of the spot. *Namancos*: near Cape Finisterre in NW. Spain. *Bayona's hold*: a fortified rock at the entrance of Vigo Bay, south of Finisterre.

164. An allusion to the story that dolphins, charmed by the music of Arion, an ancient Greek bard, bore him to land out of the sea.

173. *him that walked the waves*: Christ. See the *Gospel of Mark*, vi. 45-51.

176. *nuptial song*. The reference is to the 'marriage of the Lamb' (*Apocalypse*, xix. 6-9), by which was symbolized the final union of believers with Christ.

184. *In . . . recompense* as the great reward of your goodness.

189 Doric was the particular dialect of Greek in which Theocritus wrote.

### *The Garden of Eden*

From *Paradise Lost*, Bk. IV, ll. 131-311

*Paradise Lost* (1674), composed between 1668 and 1673, is an epic poem in twelve books on the story of the Fall of Man as related in the Bible (*Genesis*, i-iii). Adam and Eve, the first created man and woman, were placed by God in the Garden of Eden, with only one restraint on their freedom of action, a veto on their eating of the fruit of one mysterious tree, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Satan in the form of a serpent tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and she in turn induced her husband to do the same. The result was expulsion from Eden and the introduction of death and other ills into the world. Satan, the arch-devil, had originally been an angel in Heaven. Jealous of God's power, he had led a rebellion in Heaven, and he and his fellow rebels had been cast down into Hell. From Hell Satan had made his way upwards to the new-created material Universe, and descended from the sun on to the Earth at Mt Niphates in Armenia, not far off Eden. Here the present extract begins.

2. Eden in Milton is the entire district of which Paradise, the Garden of Eden, is a small portion.

11. *woody theatre*: the rows of trees, ascending in terraces, rank above rank, are like the tiers of seats in a Greek amphitheatre.

31. *Mozambic Cape* in E. Africa.

32. *Sabean*: of 'Saba' or 'Sheba', a place in S. Arabia.

36-7. *the Fiend who came their bane*: Satan, who came to ruin Eden and so destroy the sweet scents.

38-41. An allusion to the story in *Tobit*, a Jewish book in the collection known as the Apocrypha, often bound up with the Bible. Sara, a woman in Media, had had seven husbands, all killed on their wedding night by an evil spirit, Asmodai or Asmodeus, himself enamoured of Sara. Tobias, the son of Tobit, then married her, and, instructed by an angel, Raphael, by burning the heart and liver of a fish, warded off the fiend, who fled to Egypt and was there confined in bonds by Raphael.

46. *perplexed*: 'intricately entangled', with a hint of the more usual metaphorical sense also, 'rendered perplexing'.

51. *bound*: in two senses here, 'leap' and 'limit'. Milton is fond of puns in grim contexts.



62-3. Milton remembers the *Gospel of John*, x. 1-16, and combines the image of the thief who 'entereth not by the door, but climbeth up some other way' (x. 1) with the 'hireling' of x. 12, 13.

64 'And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.' (*Genesis*, 11. 9)

81-2 i.e. 'from the river Jordan in Palestine to the river Tigris in Mesopotamia'. *Auran*: a district east of Jordan. *Seleucia* a city on the Tigris, founded by Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander the Great's soldiers. *Grecian Kings*: Seleucus and his successors

84 *Telassar*: a city or region in Mesopotamia where 'the children of Eden dwelt' (*1 Kings*, xix. 12; *Isaiah*, xxxvii. 12)

89. Ambrosia was the food of the gods.

91 *Our death* 'the cause of our death', since the eating of it 'brought death into the world' (*Paradise Lost*, I. 3)

106. *to tell*: Supply '(there) needs' from 'needs' in 105

108 The original sense of *orient* is 'rising', of the sun. By two different developments it comes to mean 'eastern' and 'bright'

110. *nectar* i.e. as refreshing as nectar, the drink of the gods

112. In Milton's time artificial gardening laid out the flower-beds in various quaint shapes

120. *Hesperian fables*: legends of the garden of Hesperus with its golden apples

126. Nature prior to man's fall was free from all implications. Thorns on roses, according to this view, were one of the many defects due to man's fall

136 *universal Pan*: Pan, the god of shepherds, came to be thought of as the god of all Nature. Milton, playing on the name (for *pan* in Greek means 'everything') represents him as the universal spirit of Nature.

137. *Graces* three nymphs, or goddesses personifying aspects of beauty.

138 *th' eternal Spring*. before the Fall there was no change of seasons, but perpetual spring or summer. Compare *As You Like It*, II. i. 5. 6

138-41. Proserpina, daughter of Ceres, was kidnapped by Pluto (*Dis*), the king of Hades, while gathering flowers in the valley of Enna in Sicily. She became queen of the underworld *That fair field* 'the well-known field.' So again *all that pain, that sweet grove* (141. 2).

143-4. *Daphne* a grove sacred to Apollo, named from the nymph whom he loved. *Orontes*: a river in N Syria, near which the grove was. *Castalian spring*: a fountain in the grove.

145-9 *Nysean isle*: Nysa, an island in the river Triton in Libya. *Amalthea*: mother of Bacchus by Ammon, identified here with *Cham* (a Moabite deity), and, as the supreme Libyan deity, with *Jove*

150-3. The story is that Abyssinian kings kept their children closely guarded on Mt Amara, on the Equator (*Ethiop line*) near the source of the Nile (*Nilus' head*).

155. *Assyrian*: i.e. 'in what was (later) Assyria'.

162. 'God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness' (*Genesis*, i. 26)

166-71 Milton strongly believed in the subordination of woman to man. Here he makes even Eve's knowledge of God dependent on her obedience to Adam as created in His image.

### ANDREW MARVELL (1621-78)

Andrew Marvell is one of a large number of fine lyric poets who flourished in the middle of the 17th century. At his best he is the equal of any of them: and the varied characteristics of their lyrics are almost all to be found dispersed through his different lyrical poems. He also wrote political satires, which are more noteworthy historically than as poetry.

The Ode here chosen (written soon after the return of Cromwell from Ireland in 1650) is declared by Palgrave in his *Golden Treasury* to be 'one of the finest in our language, and more in Milton's style than has been reached by any other poet'; while Saintsbury praises its 'majesty in style' as 'among the noblest of its kind in English'. Like Milton's, the expression is condensed and pregnant, with several traces of Latin influence in idiom and construction. But while Milton could more than match its 'majesty', the wit and subtlety of such lines as 105-8 are quite outside Milton's scope.

Marvell combined with Parliamentary politics certain Cavalier friendships and sympathies: and the poem reflects this in the generous praise of Charles I (57-64). The eulogy of Cromwell is also somewhat double-edged, and almost suggests (e.g. in 9-12, 17-20, 49-52) the crafty ambitious adventurer which the 18th century imagined him to be.

The stanza, which consists of two rhymed iambic couplets, of longer and shorter lines successively, seems to be Marvell's own invention—a difficult form, one would have thought, for sustained and dignified thought; yet Marvell makes it suit his purpose perfectly.

1 *appear* Either 'forward' is to be understood again, or else *appear* is used in a pregnant sense—'become well-known'

15-16. i.e. he carved out a path for himself by opposing others of his own party. The next stanza explains the fact psychologically.

17-20. 'Rivalry and hostility are equally obnoxious to a brave

spirit, to whom restraint within limits' (*to* *enclose*) 'is worse than opposition'

23-4. An allusion to the execution of the king

34. i.e. 'destroy the political order built up through centuries of effort'.

41-2. An allusion to the scientific notions that 'nature abhors a vacuum', and that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Such occupation was called 'penetration of dimensions'

47. *Hampton*. Hampton Court, where the king resided and negotiated with Cromwell and Ireton, the army leaders, in the late summer and autumn of 1647

49-52. The notion that the king's flight to Carisbrooke Castle in November, 1647, was cunningly induced by Cromwell lacks all evidence. The 'subtlety' was the king's 'Safe in the Isle of Wight, Charles thought he could negotiate with Parliament, Scots and officers. If negotiations failed, escape to France would not be difficult.'—Firth, *Cromwell* (1900), p. 185.

68. *The Capitol* one of the seven hills on which Rome was built; then (as here) the citadel built on it 'It is called the Capitol because, when the foundations of the temple of Jupiter were being dug, a human head' (*caput*) 'is said to have been found here.'—Varro, *De Lingua Latina*

83-92. In the event Cromwell falsified this expectation of his humble subservience to Parliament.

101-2 i.e. Cromwell threatens to become conqueror of France like Julius Caesar, and invader of Italy like Hannibal

104. Climacterics were, in the notions of Marvell's day, years of a man's life (multiples of 7) in which he was specially liable to death. Here the word is used as an adjective, and metaphorically.

105-8 *parti-coloured*: varied in colour, i.e. shifty and changeable. There is a subtle point here. Their minds were like their tartans (*plaid*), whose chequered 'patterns were protective colouring.' *This valour* is Cromwell's *Sad* sober, in contrast to *parti-coloured*.

109-12. The terms are metaphorical. Cromwell and the English soldiers are like a hunter with hounds, and the Scots like the Highland deer hiding in the bracken

117-18. The hilt, because shaped like a cross, would frighten away spirits

## JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700)

John Dryden made a notable contribution to English literature both in prose and poetry—in prose as a literary critic, and in poetry above all as a satirist and reasoner in verse. His great achievement in poetry was the substitution of order for license; in place of slipshod and loose blank verse he established the dominance of the heroic couplet as *the* metre for all serious poetry for a whole century. His



successor, Pope, imparted to it additional polish and precision, at the cost, however, of some of Dryden's flexibility and variety of effect. Dryden wrote a large number of plays, and much argumentative and narrative verse, as well as a few lyrics. But his greatest poems are his satires. *Absalom and Achitophel*, *The Medal*, and *Mac Flecknoe* (1681 and 1682) are all masterpieces in this kind. They paved the way for Pope's and Byron's satires, but remain unsurpassed by either.

*Mac Flecknoe* (1682) is a devastating attack on a fellow dramatist, Shadwell. Originally a friend of Dryden and praised by him, Shadwell had fallen out with Dryden and had attacked his play, *Aureng-Zebe*. The present poem is Dryden's shattering retort. As an effective satire the poem has few or no equals. It has consigned Shadwell to an immortality of ignominy which is undeserved, as his plays are by no means worthless. Dryden overwhelms his victim with ridicule by representing him as the son of Richard Flecknoe, a contemptible Irish minor poet and playwright, whom he hails as the unchallenged monarch of 'all the realms of nonsense'.

25. Shadwell's corpulence is alluded to cf 187-9

29. Thomas Heywood (1575?-1630?) and James Shirley (1596-1666), were both prolific playwrights, and are somewhat unjustly pilloried here

36. Flecknoe had lived for some time in Lisbon, and was treated kindly by King John of Portugal

42 A mocking reference to Shadwell's play, *Epsom Wells* (1673)

43 *Arion* a Greek musician, saved from drowning by being carried ashore on a dolphin's back. See *Lycidas*, 164. and note

51 *St André* a celebrated French dancing master of the day.

52 *Psyche* opera by Shadwell (1674).

55 *Singleton* a famous singer of the day.

57. *Villenus*: a leading character in Davenant's opera, *The Siege of Rhodes* (1663)

61 *for anointed dulness* i.e. to be crowned as king supreme in dullness

76 *Maximin*: hero of Dryden's play, *Tyrannic Love* (1670), who dying defies the gods

77. *Fletcher* John (1579-1625), wrote both comedies and tragedies, many of them in collaboration with Francis Beaumont. *buskins* the high boots worn by ancient Athenian tragic actors; hence the emblem of tragedy.

78. *Jonson*: Ben (1573?-1637), the greatest writer of comedies, after Shakespeare, of the 16th and 17th centuries. *socks* the low shoes worn by ancient comic actors, and thus the emblem of comedy.

79. *gentle Simkin* a cobbler in an interlude. Shoemaking was called 'the gentle craft'.

85 *Dekker*. Thomas (1570?-1632), well-known comic dramatist.

88-91. *Psyche* (1674), *The Miser* (1672), *The Humorists* (1671) are plays by Shadwell; Raymond a character in the last, and Bruce in Shadwell's *The Virtuoso* (1670) The special allusion in *Hypocrites* is uncertain.

98. *Heywood, Shirley*: see note on 29 above. *Ogleby*. John (1600-76), poet, translated Homer, Vergil and Aesop in verse

101 *Herringman* leading publisher of Charles II's reign.

104 *Ascanius* called in Vergil, as the son of Aeneas, 'Rome's second hope'. Shadwell, as the hope of London, is a second Ascanius.

160-7. *fogs*: to symbolize dullness, take the place of a saint's halo round Shadwell's head.

114-15 When a king is crowned, the highest Church dignitary anoints him with oil Flecknoe had originally been a Roman Catholic priest

118. *Love's Kingdom* a play by Flecknoe (1664)

122. The poppies symbolize Shadwell's sleepy dullness

133 The notion and the phrasing here are borrowed from classic poets The idea is that the poetic impulse is the result of possession by a deity, which at first the poet tries to resist.

145. *Virtuosos*: see note on 88-91 above.

147 *gentle George* Sir George Etherege, writer of comedies (1635?-91) The names which follow are of characters in his plays.

159-60 Sir Charles Sedley (1639?-1701), poet and playwright, had written the prologue to Shadwell's *Epsom Wells* (1673), and Dryden here hints that he helped Shadwell to compose it.

164 *Sir Formal Trifle* is a rhetorical character in Shadwell's *The Virtuoso*.

166. *northern dedications* Shadwell's dedications of works to the Duke of Newcastle, and to his son, the Earl of Ogle

175 *Prince Nicander* a character in Shadwell's *Psyche*

178 *Etheridge* See note on 147

187-8 Ben Jonson, like Shadwell, was corpulent But Shadwell's vacuity, like a distension of the abdomen with gas (*tympany*), symbolized, says Dryden, his vacuity of sense, the opposite of Jonson's wit.

201. Ingenious acrostics were written in lines which formed different shapes, such as wings or altars.

205-7. In Shadwell's *The Virtuoso*, Bruce and Longville play this trick on Sir Formal Trifle

210-11. See *The Second Book of Kings* in the Bible, ii: 1-15.

## ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744)

Alexander Pope was a great artist in verse. Indian students are misled by textbook summaries into supposing him to be no true poet. If poetry necessarily connotes vision, the accusation is true. Pope did not deal in 'thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls'. He aimed at expressing unforgettably and finally 'what oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed'. In this aim he succeeded amazingly, not only by his mastery of verbal neatness and cleverness, but also by the more specifically poetic means of melody and rhythm. If craftsmanship in words and sounds and metre is the mark of a poet, then Pope was one of the greatest. But his poetry is more intellectual than emotional. Though not without imagination and feeling, it is without passion, and in it imagination keeps within the strict limits of the normal beliefs and ideas of an eighteenth century man of fashion. Pope wrote little lyrical poetry; and his reflective and critical poems (*The Essay on Man*, and *The Essay on Criticism*, for example), embody only second-hand thought. His greatest works are satirical, or concerned with contemporary society life, like the *Dunciad*, the *Moral Epistles*, *The Imitations of Horace* and *The Rape of the Lock*.

### *The Rape of the Lock*

This mock-heroic poem is the most purely delightful of Pope's poems. It is not merely or chiefly a burlesque of epic poetry. It is a supremely witty social document which mirrors eighteenth century elegant society life, especially the life of women, from an angle of vision which is a blend of satirical amusement and fascinated interest; and to sparkling wit and invention it adds sheer poetic beauty in such passages as the description of Belinda's toilet (129—38) and of the sylphs (204—16).

The poem is based on a real incident. A young Lord Petre had grievously offended a Miss Arabella Fermor by cutting off a lock of her hair. The result was a family quarrel between the Petres and the Fermors, which Pope's friend, John Caryl (see 3), suggested might be healed if Pope would write a playful poem on the cause of offence. He did so, dedicating it to Miss Fermor. It was first written

and published in 1712 in a shorter form in two cantos ; and then enlarged to five cantos, mainly by the addition of the 'supernatural 'machinery', for the edition of 1714.

The Loeb translation of Martial's epigram is: ' I was loth, Polytimus, to mar those locks of thine, but glad am I to have granted that much to thy prayers. ' Pope has substituted ' Belinda ' for ' Polytime '.

### *Canto I*

18 The old 'repeater' watch struck the previous hour when a knob was pressed, and so gave the time in the dark.

30 *sylph* Pope's own note in his dedication of the poem sufficiently explains. 'The Machinery, Madam, is a term invented by the critics to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Demons are made to act in a poem . . . These Machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of Spirits. . . The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with . . . According to these gentlemen, the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The Gnomes or Demons of Earth delight in mischief but the Sylphs, whose habitation is in the Air are the best-condition'd Creatures imaginable. '

23. *birth-night beau* gallant at a ball to celebrate the reigning monarch's birthday

32 *The silver token* the fairies' reward to the housemaid who swept the hearth well—a silver penny in her shoe

52. *elemental tea*: i.e. instead of the tea they drank on earth they now sip water, the element they inhabit.

57-8. 'They say any mortals may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle Spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true adepts, an inviolate preservation of chastity.'—Pope, in the Dedication

99 ff. Maidens' coquetry, in which they yield to no one lover, is the work of the sylphs, who divert their affections constantly to new frivolous objects of desire (the things which these lovers offer them). The attractions of one lover's coach-and-six drive out another, and so on. Thus their hearts are like a moving toyshop.

106. *Ariel*, the name of the delicate spirit in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, suggests by its sound the idea of 'spirit of the air', and is therefore chosen by Pope.

119 The terms of the love-letter are satirically indicated.

121-8. Pope satirically describes the toilet as though it was a religious rite.

134. *all Arabia* 'all the perfumes of Arabia'. For Arabia as the source of perfumes, cf. *The Garden of Eden*, 31-3

138. *patches*: small pieces of black silk or plaster stuck on the face to show up the complexion better. Note the satirical force of including Bibles in the list, and also the emphatic alliteration, which only increases the bathos.

## Canto II

186. *vast French romances*: a hit at the immense length of the fashionable seventeenth century French romances of Mlle de Scudéry and others.

193. *half his prayer*: i.e. to obtain, but not to retain it.

241 ff. Ladies' artificial toilets, with their powders, scents, paints, etc., are mockingly expatiated on.

249-57. There is exquisite *raillery* in this series of alternatives, in which the momentous and the trivial are combined in pairs.

259 ff. The names are coined to fit the functions *Zephyretta* suggests 'zephyr', a breeze; *Brillante*, shining; *Momentilla*, the passing moments; and *Crispissa*, crisped=curled

281. *Ixion* punished in Hades for attempting to seduce Juno, Jove's wife, by being fixed on an ever-revolving wheel

282. *mill*. for grinding the coffee or the cocoa bean to make coffee or chocolate

## Canto III

293-4. Hampton Court Palace

297 *great Anna*. Queen Anne, then reigning. The *three realms* are England, Wales and Scotland

317 ff. In *ombre* one player plays against two others, the players having nine cards apiece. The single player has the choice of trumps. The values of the cards vary according to what suit is trumps. When it is spades, the four highest cards (held by Belinda) are ace of spades, two of spades, ace of clubs, and king of spades. In the non-trump suits the values also vary, but in all, king, queen and knave are the three highest cards

320 *the sacred nine*. the nine muses of Greek and Latin mythology

342. *verdant field*: card tables covered with green cloth; cf. *level green* (370).

357-8 The Amazons were a female race of warriors mentioned by Homer

412-14. Scylla, daughter of Nisus, king of Megara, in love with Minos, king of Crete, pulled out from her father's head the lock of hair on which the safety of the city depended, when Minos was besieging it. She was changed into a *ciris*, usually supposed to be some kind of bird

448 The old trick of pairing small with great matters.

455. *Atalantis*: a book of slanderous gossip, by a Mrs Manley (1709).

## Canto IV

481. As 'Ariel' suggests air, so *Umbriel*, a coined name, suggests the darkness under the earth (Latin *umbra* 'shade') suitably to the gnome.

484. *Spleen*: usually 'anger', here anger combined with morbid depression and other pathological states. Here personified

492 *Megrim*: violent headache, usually on one side only. Here personified.



506. i.e. they pretend illness to show off their new dressing-gown (*night-dress*).

508. Various hallucinations, visions and delusions of spleen. Pope is largely drawing on Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), a vast work which analyses the causes, symptoms and cure of 'melancholy'.

514. *angels in machines*. i.e. intervening miraculously like 'the god out of a machine' in Greek tragedy.

539. i.e. caused husbands to suspect their wives of unfaithfulness.

550. In Homer's *Odyssey* Ulysses receives winds in a bag from Aeolus, the keeper of the winds, thus ensuring fine weather.

567. The hair is tied up in paper at night to keep it in curl.

570 *loads of lead*: curl papers were fastened with lead

582-4 i.e. exhibited under a glass in a ring blazing with diamonds

585 *Hyde-park Circles* the ring of 44. See footnote there

586. *Bow*: in 'the City', the mercantile part of London

588 Note the satire of the ascending scale, with *men* at the bottom.

591-2 Admirable satire on aristocratic upbringing The only accomplishment the knight can boast is the elegant handling and twirling of a beautiful cane

#### *Canto V*

649-50 An allusion to the fourth book of Vergil's *Aeneid*. Aeneas deserts Dido, Queen of Carthage, Anna, her sister vainly beseeching him to stay. cf. *The Scholar Gipsy*, 208-10

680 ff In Homer's *Iliad* the gods join in the war of the Greeks and Trojans

709 *Meander* a very winding river flowing through the plain of Troy Hence the word 'meander'

715-18 Imitated from Homer's *Iliad*, where the fortunes of the combatants Hector and Achilles are decided beforehand by Zeus's weighing them in a pair of scales

749-50. In Shakespeare's play a handkerchief, a wedding gift of Othello, lost by Desdemona, and placed by Iago in Cassio's room, clinches Othello's suspicion of Desdemona's unfaithfulness to him see *Oth*, III, iv.

757-8. The idea of a limbo in the moon for things lost on earth is borrowed by Pope from Ariosto's burlesque Italian epic, *Orlando Furioso* (1516 and 1532)

761 *Death-bed alms* are in the list of deceptive things because they are worthless pretences of repentance.

769-170. Romulus, founder of Rome, suddenly disappeared in a storm Proculus declared he saw him ascend into the sky.

773. Berenice, daughter of a king of Cyrene in the third century B.C., dedicated her hair to Venus, placing it in her temple. It disappeared, but an astronomer, Conon declared it had been carried to heaven and placed among the stars.

780. *Rosamond's lake*: in St James's Park, London, named after Rosamond 'the Fair', mistress of Henry II of England.

781-2. John Partridge was a compiler of prophetic astronomical almanacs from 1681 onwards. Pope here derides these. Swift in a burlesque of them predicted Partridge's own death.

## THOMAS GRAY (1716-71)

Thomas Gray produced only a small sheaf of lyrical poetry. But he is important as one of the poets that mark a transition from the 'Augustan' mode of poetry of Dryden and Pope to the more impassioned and wider-ranging poetry of the 'Romantics', Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. Gray's poems show traces of the qualities of both kinds. He is touched with a romantic sensibility towards both man and nature. In his famous *Elegy* he exalts the humble and poor in a way that slightly anticipates Burns and Wordsworth. His interest in Celtic and Scandinavian poetry, of which *The Bard* is one example, is in line with the Romantic quest for the remote or unfamiliar. But his cultivated, scholarly style, approaching at times the laboured and the artificial, reminds one more of the Augustans.

*The Progress of Poesy* (1754) and *The Bard* (1755) Gray described as 'Pindaric Odes'. Pindar was a great Greek lyric poet who lived from 522 to 443 B.C. His Odes were poems set to music and sung by bands of singers to a measured dance. They were arranged metrically for the purpose in groups of three stanzas each (strophe, antistrophe and epode). The strophes and antistrophes were sung in turn by half the band, while in the epode the whole choir joined. The groups of stanzas corresponded metrically, as well as each strophe and antistrophe; the epodes diverged. In each stanza the lines varied in length and rhythm. This arrangement Gray follows, though it has little meaning left without the music. The greater qualities of Pindar, his magnificence of language and melody, are beyond Gray's compass, though he is seeking to emulate them.

*The Progress of Poesy*

In each set of three stanzas the metre of the first two stanzas is iambic, varied by trochees in line 8: the length of the lines varies from 4 to 6 feet. The metre of the epodes varies from trochaic to iambic throughout (trochees, ll. 1-3 and 7-11; iambi, 4-6 and 12-17): the length of the lines varies from 3 to 6 feet.



1. *Æolian*: from Æolis, part of Asia Minor, Pindar speaks of his own poetry as 'Æolian song'.

4 ff The various streams represent the various kinds of poetry.

9. *Ceres' golden reign*: fields full of crops in ear (Ceres was goddess of agriculture).

15. In Greece the earliest stringed instrument was said to be made of a tortoise's shell.

17. Thrace was supposed to be a favourite haunt of Mars.

27. *Idalia*: place in Cyprus, where Venus was worshipped.

29 *Cytherea*: 'of Cythera', the island due south of Greece (now Cerigo), where Venus landed when she rose from the sea.

49-53 'Just as night and its attendant horrors are chased away by the sun, so human ills are alleviated by poetry' (*the heav'nly Muse*—48).

53. *Hyperion*. the sun-god in the dynasty preceding the Olympians; then dispossessed by Apollo. *His glittering shafts* are the sunbeams.

54-65. declare poetry universal, to be found alike in the Arctic regions (54-7) and in tropical S. America among savage Indians (58-62).

66-78 The old poetry of Greece, now dead.

66. *Delphi* the seat of the famous oracle of Apollo in N Greece, just SE. of Mt Parnassus (78).

68. *Ilissus*: a river flowing from Mt Hymettus to the sea, skirting the east of Athens

69. Meander: see note on *The Rape of the Lock*, 709.

81-2. Historically indefensible, since it ignores whole periods and languages—medieval Latin, Italian, Provençal, French, German, etc

84-5 Shakespeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon, 1564

92-3 *This* the key of Comedy; *that* the key of Tragedy.

95-102. The allusion is to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which treats of matters outside time and space, and describes God in Heaven: and to his blindness, which, however, preceded the writing of the epic.

99. The images for the glory of God are drawn from the Bible—*Ezekiel*, i 20, 26

105-6. The two lines of Dryden's heroic couplet are compared to two horses, with resounding tread.

114. Pindar is compared to an eagle because of the sublimity of his thought and language. He belonged to Thebes

115-23. Gray disclaims for himself the grandeur of Pindar, but claims to have possessed from earliest years a lesser poetic gift, and powers of imagination. *Unborrowed of the sun* i.e. purely created by his imagination.

122-3. Being a poet, he is above the common crowd: though much less than a saint, he is far superior to the mere aristocrat (*the Great*).

### *The Bard*

- This poem is based upon a traditional story that Edward I slaughtered all the Welsh bards when he conquered Wales in 1282-4.

As in the previous Ode, the metre of the first two stanzas in each group of three is iambic, varied by trochees in ll. 1 and 5; and the length of the lines varies from 4 to 6 feet. In the epodes only 1. 8 is trochaic: the length of line varies from 3 to 6 feet. A distinctive feature is the internal rhyme in ll. 15 and 17 of the epodes.

3. Conquest is, by a rather far-reached fancy, imagined as a bird with blood-red wings, whose flapping fans the banners of the king.

28 *Hoel* a Welsh bard of this name flourished in the twelfth century *Llewellyn's lay*, possibly 'song about Ll.', Llewellyn being the Welsh prince overthrown by Edward in 1277 and 1282. But it may be the name here of an imaginary Welsh bard.

29-33. The names here are of legendary Welsh bards.

49 ff The idea of the three Fates weaving a web of human destiny (see *Lycidas*, 75, note) is here adapted, and the curse pronounced by the ghosts of the dead bards is described as a web which forms the *winding-sheet* of Edward's family; i.e. it dooms them to death. From 49 to 100 the dead bards are supposed to be chanting words.

53-6. Edward II, Edward I's son, was murdered in a peculiarly barbarous way in Berkeley Castle on the bank of the Severn.

57. Isabella wife of Edward II, who supported Mortimer in the revolt against her husband, is here accused of complicity in the murder. She was the daughter of Philip IV of France.

59-60. The allusion is to Edward III's victorious campaign against France—the battles of Sluys (1340) and Crecy (1346) and siege of Calais (1347).

67. *sable warrior* the Black Prince, eldest son of Edward III, who died before him.

68. *Thy son*: Edward III is here addressed.

69-70. The courtiers who desert the dying king are like insects which swarm in the sun's rays. *The rising morn*: Richard II, the new king, whose favour they court.

71-6. The gay and prosperous beginning of Richard's reign and the impending disastrous end in the seizure of the throne by Henry Bolingbroke (Henry IV) are described under the image of a pleasure vessel, setting forth in the morning proudly and gaily, while before evening a storm will come up to overwhelm it.

77-82. Richard II was deposed and imprisoned by Henry IV in the Tower of London, where, according to one tradition, here followed, he was starved to death.

83-6. The Wars of the Roses are indicated.

87. *towers of Julius*: legend has it that the Tower of London was built by Julius Caesar.

89-90. *The meek usurper* is Henry VI; *his father* is Henry V., famous for Agincourt and other victories in France; *his consort* is, Margaret of Anjou.

91-2. White and red roses respectively were the emblems of the rival parties of York and Lancaster in the civil wars.

93-4. A boar was the emblem of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III, who murdered the two young princes (hence *wallows in infant-gore*).

99. *Half of thy heart*: 'thy wife'; a Latin idiom for 'beloved'

105. The ghosts vanish, and a vision of the Tudor monarchs follows.

109-10. Henry VII and his successors, as descendants of Owen Tudor, are regarded as restoring the British dynasty, which ceased with King Arthur.

115-18 refer to Queen Elizabeth; 119-22 to the revival of poetry in her reign.

125-7. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is indicated. See Bk. I, *Proem*, 9.

128-30 refer to Elizabethan tragedy, especially Shakespeare's *Buskined*. 'tragic'; see note on *Mac Flecknoe*, 77.

131-2 refer to Milton's poetry, especially his *Paradise Lost*

135-6. i.e. does Edward suppose that he can extinguish poetry by killing the Welsh bards? As well suppose a cloud can put out for ever the sun.

137. Gray echoes *Lycidas*, 169-70.

### WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)

William Cowper, though not a major poet, occupies a distinctive place in English poetry. Much of his work was written in the style of the eighteenth century Augustan verse, whose favourite metre, the heroic couplet, he constantly, as in our extract, uses. But in spirit it anticipated the later poetry. Almost for the first time in English poetry, an intensely personal note is sounded, rising to extreme poignancy at the end of the poem here chosen. The homely simplicity of many of his themes anticipates Wordsworth, one aspect of whose verse is also recalled by Cowper's love of 'Nature in her modesty'. No other has so lovingly as he sung of the familiar little animals of the English countryside. The end of the *Lines on the Receipt of my Mother's Picture* embodies in intensely sad verse Cowper's melancholy delusion (at times culminating in madness) that he was destined to damnation.

#### *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture*

The metre is the heroic couplet (ten-syllabled iambic lines rhyming in pairs), the metre *par excellence* of Augustan poets. Cowper, while retaining their metre, and to a large extent their way of using it (e.g. their habit of making the

ends of lines and couplets coincide with breaks in the sense), yet succeeds in avoiding the monotony—which he himself criticized—of the versifiers who imitated Pope, and made poetry a mechanic art. Occasionally his lines run on with no pause between (e.g. 1, 2; 9, 10; 30, 31; 32, 33; 50, 51, etc.); and he once (25-7) uses the triplet by which Dryden frequently varied the run of couplets, but which Pope used very seldom.

19. *Elysian* i.e. divinely blissful, Elysium being the abode of happiness in Hades.

24. *Wretch even then* i.e. spiritually lost, see introduction; cf. 100-5.

63. cf. Shakespeare's schoolboy with 'shining morning face' (*As You Like It* • II. vii. 145-6).

65-7. *brakes*. not 'thickets' here, but objects which check the flow as a brake stops the wheel of a carriage. His mother's love was constant and equable, like a smooth stream, as opposed to one that violently dashes over waterfalls, or is obstructed by obstacles.

75. *tissued* i.e. woven (or possibly printed) into the fabric, not embroidered on to it.

## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

William Wordsworth stands with Coleridge as the initiator of a new epoch in poetry. Their joint volume of poems, *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), for which *Tintern Abbey* was composed, was a deliberate manifesto on behalf of a new spirit in poetry, and inaugurated what we know as the Romantic Revival, of which Wordsworth was the most voluminous, and possibly the greatest, poet. Among the notes of the new poetry was a new and intenser interest in Nature; another was a new faith in Man; and of both Wordsworth was the great prophet. With him the poetry of Nature took on a new range, passing beyond sensuous presentation and description to vision and interpretation. Nature was to him a revelation, an avenue to perception of the unseen and infinite, as both the poems here selected show. He celebrates both 'Nature in her modesty', his function here being, as Pater put it, 'to open out the soul of little and familiar things', and Nature in her sublimity, among the mountains, cataracts and lakes of his beloved Lake District. Equally he is the poet of Man, of 'men as they are men within themselves'.

In poems like *Michael*, *Ruth*, and the *Tale of Margarek*, he exalted the humble and lowly, seeing

into the depth of human souls,  
Souls which appear to have no depth at all  
To careless eyes.

A special aspect of this new belief in man is his glorification of childhood, of which our second poem, the great *Ode*, is the supreme expression.

Wordsworth at his greatest stands on a level with the mightiest in the world's literature. But he is very unequal. The period of his greatest inspiration was short, a precious ten years or so from 1795 onwards. Thereafter he continued to write voluminously for more than 40 more years, while the flashes of inspiration grew ever rarer and briefer, so that after *Laodamia* (1814) the number of great poems he wrote could almost be counted on the fingers of one hand. The chief of them were sonnets.

### *Lines Composed near Tintern Abbey*

No one poem expresses so clearly and powerfully what Nature meant to Wordsworth as this. It shows him as not merely the 'lover' (103) but the 'worshipper of Nature' (152), 'Nature's Priest' (*Immortality Ode*, 72). She is exhibited here as Man's 'prime teacher', exercising a purifying influence, enabling him to 'see into the life of things', and bringing him the sense of an all-pervading spirit that 'rolls through all things'. Nature at this stage in his development had to Wordsworth the value of God, even if he did not identify the two.

The metre is blank verse (unrhymed ten-syllabled iambic lines), of which Wordsworth at his best, as here and in parts of *The Prelude*, is one of the few masters.

22-4. i.e. Wordsworth, though absent, has vividly seen the scene in his mind's eye. It is characteristic of him that constantly some beautiful scene meant as much or more to him in memory as at the moment of actual sight. cf. below, 62-5.

29. *my purer mind*: either 'the region of more purely mental experience', or 'my mind, which is then made purer by them'.

37-49. A good instance of the 'mystic', 'transcendental' note in his experience of Nature. Beyond the sheer pleasure of the scene (22-30) and its moral influence (31-5), Nature has a deeper gift to bestow, a mood in which almost total withdrawal of physical



consciousness brings a sense of enlightenment, an intuition of the ultimate meaning of things.

75 ff. A valuable analysis by the poet himself of the stages in his appreciation of Nature. In youth it gave an intense, but purely sensuous pleasure (75-83). Later he learnt to temper his raptures by associating human sorrow with Nature (88-93); and in Nature he discerned the presence of the Universal Spirit (93-102). Thus Nature became his supreme inspiration and moral guide (102-11)

106. Beauty, according to this, is partly the creation of the mind, and only partly given by the senses. Coleridge went further, and wrote,

We receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone does Nature live.

115-16. *Friend*: Dorothy Wordsworth, the 'Sister' of 121

133-4. Startling in their optimism, but demonstrating how much the poet owed to Nature.

138. *wild ecstasies*. cf. 118-19 above.

### *Ode. Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*

This Ode enshrines Wordsworth's belief in the exalted nature of childhood. The child he here regards as nearer to God than the adult, chiefly on two grounds. First, because he experiences in Nature a heavenly glory over and above the merely visible beauty, a glory which fades away as he grows up. Secondly, he possesses intuitions and a power of vision which the man loses in growing up. Two special instances of this are given: first his instinctive conviction of his own imperishability (118-29); secondly, experiences in which the outward world seems to melt away into immateriality (145-51).

But the Ode is no mere glorification of childhood or disparagement of age. Much 'remains behind', or is a new acquisition of the grown man—the memory of childhood's vision (133-71), his original joy in Nature, though modified by the experiences of life (191-207), and the added fruits of experience (185-90).

The idea of pre-existence is, despite the title of the Ode, only a secondary element in the poem. The primary thought is of the higher endowments of childhood on which the speculation about a previous life is based. When the poem was first composed, in 1802, stanzas I to IV stood alone. Only in 1806 was the philosophical theory introduced with stanza V, and then so abruptly as to read more like a begin-

ning than a continuation. Stanzas 1-iv form a whole complete in itself without this later addition. The essence of the poem lies in the experience of childhood it records, rather than in the theory formed to explain it, which was an afterthought of the poet's.

The stanzas vary in the number and metrical character of the lines: and in each particular stanza there is the utmost variety in the metre and length of the different lines, as well as in the order of the rhymes. Wordsworth succeeds admirably, not only in sustaining the music, but also in making variations of metre correspond with changes of thought and feeling. He does the same with his diction. Much of it illustrates his ideal of dignified simplicity, but at times it rises to grandeur without ever falling into pomposity. In all its variations it is at once noble and appropriate.

5. Wordsworth himself paraphrases this in a prose note, 'the dream-like vividness and splendour which invests objects of sight in childhood'.

23. The *timely utterance* is that of 1-18.

28. *the fields of sleep*: the still reposeful countryside. (It is early morning.)

56. 'Visionary' is the word Wordsworth always tends to use of those transcendental experiences of Nature so distinctive of him. Here it is used of the radiance seen on Nature in childhood as being like those things seen in a dream, a vision, cf. 5, and *vision splendid* in 73.

58. See introductory note.

59-65. The soul, previously existing in Heaven with God, is like a star which, when it rises on the horizon in one hemisphere, has set in another.

64. *clouds of glory*: the child's heavenly qualities, now partially dimmed, are like clouds lit up by the sun.

70. Wordsworth, though supposed to be an austere moralist, has an immense belief in the beneficent effect of joy. cf. 163; and *Tintern Abbey*, 124-5.

71. *The east* is the quarter from which light comes, and so stands here for the previous heavenly life. Later, the imagery of sea and land is used (165-71).

72. *Nature's Priest*: cf. *Tintern Abbey*, 151-3, and introductory note.

78. Either 'she longs to win his affection as being of her own kindred' (which however seems contradictory of the main thought of the stanza); or, 'she has longings appropriate to her own nature'.

82. *her Inmate*: the metaphor is here mixed; Earth, man's nurse, has become the cottage in which he lives.

88. The child is annoyed by his mother dashing at him from time to time (*sallies*) to kiss him.



90 *plan or chart* his toys, used to represent some scene of human life.

103. 'Humours' was an Elizabethan term for idiosyncrasies of character, in which one particular quality or passion swallowed up all else. It was in this sense that Ben Jonson used the term in his two 'comedies of humours'. Wordsworth, by *thumourous* here means merely 'exhibiting different types of character'.

111 ff. The child, Wordsworth here claims, alone has insight into ultimate and eternal reality (*the eternal deep*). He is *deaf* to the noises of earth, and *silent* in the sense that he cannot declare his vision to others. But even on Wordsworth's own premisses the claim can hardly be defended. Though the grown man has lost childhood's vision as an experience, he alone, as he remembers it, can understand what it signified, and so alone deserves the titles *philosopher* and *seer*.

115 ff. A double contrast in *rest*—effortless acquisition and permanent retention as opposed to the toil and unsucccess of the grown man.

118 *Immortality*. If one may coin a word, 'eternality' here; it includes pre-existence as well as survival after death.

123, 4. In imitating his elders the child is trying to summon manhood to come before its due time.

124-127 shows that *yoke* is here 'servitude to custom'.

129. Age is compared to a fire that has burnt down to mere embers: the kindling vision of childhood was burnt low.

134-47. The greatest boon of childhood consists in its intuitions of an invisible world. *Most worthy* is not a true superlative (which would contradict the poet's own statement), but means 'very worthy in itself'.

141 ff. The following statement by the poet explains this: 'I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature.'

145. The *worlds not realized* are the material visible realms, less real to the child than the invisible.

154-5. Again a double contrast, *noisy*—*silence*; *moments*—*eternal*.

163. The *sea* is the previous existence with God; the *land* is earthly life. Infancy is nearest this pre-natal life, and so *the shore*; age furthest off, and so *inland*.

191. To live . . . is in apposition to, and defines, *one delight*.

199. *Another race*: the course of man's life from childhood to age, the first race being the sun's course through the sky.

202-3. Part of Wordsworth's greatness as a poet was, in Arnold's words, 'because of the extraordinary power with which he feels the joy offered to us in nature'.

## SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

Sir Walter Scott is greater as a novelist than as a poet. Only at moments does he rise to supreme poetic heights, and then in lyrics too short for inclusion in this Selection. But

his series of metrical romances, from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), through *Marmion* (1808), to *Rokeby* (1813), gave readers a kind of narrative poem that had never been written before. Into them he poured his own spirit of adventure and action, and his love of wild romantic scenery and of an equally romantic past. Exactly fitted to this matter were the unfailing vigour and freshness of his style, and the speed and energetic swing of his metre. The highest poetic felicities of expression, as well as the vision and the passion of the greatest romantic poetry, are not in his verses. Yet they have a truly poetic quality of a kind that appeals to the average reader when more exquisite poetic gifts would be beyond his apprehension.

### *Britain's Winter*

From *Marmion*, Introduction to Canto First ll. 1-36 and 53-205

This extract fails to illustrate what only an extended extract from the narrative portion of one of his tales in verse could do, some of the most distinctive qualities of Scott—his love of the past, of antiquarian detail, especially of the Middle Ages, the rich romantic vein in which he was one of the first to work: and his gift, surpassed only by Milton, of exploiting for poetry the music and suggestive associations of place-names. But the lines embody Scott's love of doughty deeds (though the daring is martial only in Nelson's case), expressed with the ease and fluency and vitality which were at once Scott's strength and the sign of his limitations.

1-36. This was written at Ashestiel, on the south bank of the Tweed, a few miles NW. of Selkirk. Here Scott had leased a house on the edge of a deep ravine (the *steepy linn* of 3), down which ran a rivulet to the river (5-14). *Needpathfell*, (20), 1,200 feet high, is 2½ miles due east Ashestiel on the further side of the Tweed. *Yair* (22) and *Glenkinnon* (30) are small 'burns' (streams) on the Ashestiel side, running into the Tweed to the east and south-east of Scott's house. The Yair runs between two hills of over 1,200 and 1,500 feet respectively, which face Needpath Hill across the river (hence *sister-heights*, 22).

c. 15. *Autumn's glowing red*: the red of the leaves in autumn.

c. 21. *Sallow*: pale yellow, because of the withering grass. *russet*: from the reddish brown of the fallen leaves.

41. The departure of the greatest Englishmen, Nelson, Pitt and Fox, leaves England as desolate as the countryside in winter.

44. Nelson is *The buried warlike*, Pitt *the wise*.

55. Nelson was killed in the hour of his crowning victory of Trafalgar, 21 October 1805. The Romans called the sea off SW. Spain, where the battle was fought, *Gaditanum*, from *Gades* = Cadiz.

64 *Who bade . . .*: Pitt, Prime Minister, 1783-1801 and 1804-6.

66. Refers to Nelson's three great naval victories—the Battle of the Nile, 1799, which destroyed Buonaparte's fleet and his hopes of conquering India; of the Baltic, 1801, which destroyed the Danish fleet under the guns of the Copenhagen forts, and of Trafalgar, 1805, which inflicted a crushing defeat on the combined fleets of France and Spain.

70. Pitt died in January, 1806, at the age of forty-six.

75 ff. This is the Tory Scott's version of the stern repression by Pitt's Government of the more radical reformers, and of sympathizers with the French Revolution, such as Tom Paine, the Republican author of *The Rights of Man*, the scientist Priestly, and the shoemaker Hardy and his Corresponding Society.

89-92. Note the rhetorical trick of the inverted order in which the watchman (*warder*), trumpet, beacon, and column reappear.

93-100. Palinurus was pilot of Aeneas' fleet in Virgil's *Aeneid*. The god of sleep, after vainly trying to induce him to desert his post at the helm, put him to sleep, and he fell overboard, wrenching off the rudder and carrying it into the sea with him.

104 *The bloody tocsin* the alarm signal announcing revolution, like that in France.

111. *his rival* Charles James Fox, the leader of the Whig opposition against Pitt, whose tomb is close to Pitt's in Westminster Abbey.

132-3. See *Gospel of Luke*, ii. 14.

139-40. Austria, Prussia and Russia at different times had all joined England against France. Austria made peace with France in 1797, and, again joining England, was defeated at Hohenlinden in 1800, and finally decisively at Austerlitz in 1805. Prussia retired from the coalition from 1795 to 1805. Russia, having joined the coalition in 1799, deserted it the next year. The references must be to these earlier events rather than to the final defeat of Prussia in October, 1806, and the young Czar's alliance with Napoleon at Tilsit, in July, 1807, as Fox died before both these last events.

143. *The sullied olive-branch*: England's peace with Napoleon in the Treaty of Amiens in 1802 broke down within a year, owing to Napoleon's further predatory aims on the continent.

161. In ancient times Thessaly in Greece was noted for its witches.

180-1. *dying Nature*: the reference is to the notion of an end of the world, when the dead will rise from their graves to judgement.

### SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote a large amount of verse, the greater portion of which is uninspired and negligible. But from the mass stand out some half a dozen shorter

poems, really inspired, and three supreme masterpieces, *The Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*. It is characteristic of Coleridge that only one of these, *The Ancient Mariner*, is completed. Because most students will already have read this, the first part of *Christabel* is here preferred. Written in 1797, it conveys an atmosphere of eerie mystery and horror in a way unique in literature. When the poet resumed the poem in 1801 and wrote Part II, he was unable to recapture the witchery. Part I, as also *The Ancient Mariner*, illustrates a distinctive gift of Coleridge, the power of making the supernatural convincingly actual and real. This had been the poet's aim, as he explains in *Biographia Literaria*. 'The incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural, and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. . . . It was agreed' [between him and Wordsworth] 'that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief, for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. . . . With this view I wrote *The Ancient Mariner*, and was preparing, among other poems. . . . *Christabel*, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt.'

### *Christabel*

The metrical form is that of four-stressed lines in rhyming couplets. The greatest variety of effect is obtained by allowing perpetual change in the number and distribution of unstressed syllables, while the number of stresses remains almost unchanged. The number of syllables in a line thus varies from four ('Tu-whit!—Tu-whoo') to fourteen (277). A few lines have less than four stresses: e.g. 5, 57 (3 each); 264, 271-5 (2 each); 282-5 (3 each).

48-52. These lines are often cited as a good instance of delicate observation. But the observation may have been originally Dorothy Wordsworth's (the poet's sister), who exactly describes this very sight in her *Journal*.

88 i.e. they rode the whole day and the following night.

92. *I wis* properly 'ywis', an old adverb = 'certainly'. But it looks as if the poet here uses it as two words, = 'I know'. Once or twice in this poem, as in *The Ancient Mariner*, he enforces the medieval setting by using archaisms.

129-34. The first of several mysterious indications of some supernatural quality in the lady.

143-4. The repetition enhances the suggestion of irony here.

153 Repetition to emphasize the warning.

167. i.e. afraid, as it were, of even the air hearing

203 ff. As in *Macbeth* (III. iv. 91) the ghost of Banquo appears on Macbeth's hypocritical 'Would he were here', so Geraldine's wish conjures up before her eyes the spirit of the dead mother. Christabel does not, however, see the ghost. So in *Macbeth*, only the guilty Macbeth sees the dead Banquo.

225 *countrée* archaic spelling, partly to give a stress on the last syllable, and so make it rhyme with *see*.

252-3. Coleridge deliberately excites expectant horror, and then enhances it by leaving the sight unexplained. This method of 'horror-stricken reticence' is in strongest contrast to that of the contemporary novelists of Mystery and Terror, 'Monk' Lewis and Mrs Radcliffe.

268 i.e. she will be unable to speak a word of what has happened.

294 *I wis*:, see note on 92 above. Here 'assuredly' seems to be Coleridge's meaning.

302. i.e. it is the next morning, the two stars being the morning star, which sets at dawn, and the sun.

## GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788-1824)

Lord Byron wrote poetry of all kinds, lyric, narrative, dramatic and satiric. He first made his fame by a series of narrative poems, which speedily displaced Scott's in popularity. But his earliest poem of any real merit, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, was a satire, and his most characteristic and finest work is either pure satire, like *The Vision of Judgment*, a scathing reply to Southey's panegyric on the deceased George III, or else contains a large satiric element, as does *Don Juan*, his last and greatest work. Byron as an artist was careless, so that his work is open to criticism in its detailed execution; and he lacks the greatest imaginative qualities of his contemporaries, Shelley and Keats. His greatest quality is a passionate energy and intensity, informing most of his work.



*Venice*

This is an extract from the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, a descriptive travel poem containing in the reflections of its hero thinly veiled autobiography. The first two cantos recorded Byron's travels to Greece and the Near East with a friend, Hobhouse, in 1811 and 1812. The last two cantos, a separate and far finer piece of work, describe chiefly Italy and the places *en route* to it, as well as embody Byron's bitter reflections after he had left England for ever, in consequence of his wife's refusal to continue to live with him, and the violent revulsion of popular opinion against Byron, hitherto the lion of the British public. The extract on Venice shows fine powers of description, rendered more vivid and impressive by his acute sensibility to the historical and literary associations of the scene. This combination is typical of the second part of *Childe Harold*.

The poem is written in what are known as Spenserian stanzas, a form invented by Spenser for his *Faerie Queene*. The rhymes link all the lines together in an unbroken series. But the most distinctive feature is the lengthened last line of six feet (technically called an Alexandrine). Spenser makes this stanza an instrument of marvellous melody. In Byron's hands, though effective, it never approaches Spenser's rich and varied harmonies.

1-2. The Doge's Palace in Venice is connected with the prison by a bridge over one of the branches of the Grand Canal. From trial prisoners passed over this bridge to prison or execution; hence its name.

5. *A thousand years*: a round figure only. Venice traced its foundation to the settlement in its group of islands of Italians from inland cities seeking refuge from the invasions of Attila, the Hun, in the middle of the fifth century A.D. In the ninth and tenth centuries Venice enjoyed a virtual independence under Byzantium. See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chs. 35 and 60.

8. *the winged Lion*: the emblem of Venice. Such a lion on the top of a pillar stands in the Square of St Mark.

10. *Cybele*: a Phrygian goddess, 'the Mother of the Gods'. In some points she resembled Venus, and Byron implicitly identifies the two here; it was Venus who rose from the sea in a shell.

15-18. Venice, the great maritime and commercial state in the Middle Ages, grew rich on her trade with the East. cf. Wordsworth's 'Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee'. (*Sonnet on Venice*).

19. *Tasso*: a great Italian poet (1544-95). It is said that gondoliers used to sing songs from his opera, *Aminta*, when propelling their gondolas.

29. The point is that literature even more than her glorious history has endeared Venice to Byron.

33. *the Rialto*: the chief bridge over the Grand Canal; by Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice* supposed to be the chief business centre. *Shylock*. the Jew in Shakespeare's play. *The Moor*: Othello, the hero of Shakespeare's play, *Othello*. *Pierre*: character in Otway's tragedy, *Venice Preserved* (1682).

35. *The keystones of the arch*: i.e. they will preserve Venice from oblivion as the keystone does the Rialto from falling.

37-40. An allusion to the old ceremony of wedding the Adriatic to symbolize the city's maritime power. Once a year the Doge put to sea in the state galley, the Bucentaur, and dropped a ring into the ocean.

43. The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1177 was reconciled to Pope Alexander III, humbly throwing himself at the Pope's feet in the porch of St Mark's Cathedral. See Tout, *The Empire and the Papacy*, p. 263; Fisher, *History of Europe* (1936), p. 241.

53-4. *Dandolo*, Doge of Venice from 1193, headed the Venetian expedition against Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade in 1203 at the age of 81.

55-63. In front of the great church of St Mark stand two gilded horses

57. *Doria's menace*: Andrea Doria (1461-1560), admiral of Genoa, hated Venice, and prophesied her downfall in the words here referred to.

64. *Tyre*: the chief city of the Phoenicians, the great mariners of antiquity, as the Venetians were of the Middle Ages. (See *The Scholar Gipsy*, 232). The nickname (*by-word*) 'Pantaloön' comes from *Pantaleone*, 'the planter of the Lion', referring to the Lion on the standard of Venice.

70-1. *Candia*, a city in Crete, which withstood a long siege by the Turks in 1667-9: hence *Troy's rival*. *Lepanto's fight*: the great sea-battle (1571) in which a fleet of the Christian powers under Don John of Austria destroyed the Turkish fleet, and so decisively checked the Turks' further conquests.

76. 'Witnesses to the grand historical spectacle of their resistance to the Turks.' *Trust*: the idea is that the rest of Europe entrusted to Venice its defence against the Turks.

82-90. In 415 B.C. Athens launched an expedition against Sicily which ended in a disastrous defeat at Syracuse in 413, and the imprisonment of all the Athenian survivors. Plutarch in his *Life of Nicias* (the Athenian general in command) tells how freedom was obtained for them by Athenian maidens who charmed their captors by chanting choruses from Euripides' plays. The *car*, etc. in 86-90 are metaphorical, not literal.

98. *Ocean's children*: because Venice is built on land reclaimed from the sea.



*The Pirate Father's Return*

From *Don Juan*, Canto III, stt. xv-xxiii, xxvi-xli

*Don Juan* (1819-24) is an immense satiric narrative poem, containing in its permanently unfinished state no less than 16 Cantos. It is all Byron's epitome—'everything by turns and nothing long'—including in its endless variety of tones every note from the cynical (the dominant one) to the pathetic. The moral tone of much of it is deplorable, for Byron is out to shock English morality, which he regards as a mixture of convention and hypocrisy. But its execution is brilliant, and the energy and gusto it displays are immense. No other poem so fully exhibits Byron's range and force.

The extract chosen is from the best of the single episodes, the story of Juan and Haidée. Mainly satiric in tone, it contains some admirably vivid detailed description. Juan, cast ashore after shipwreck on a Grecian island ('one of the wild and smaller Cyclades'), has been rescued by Haidée, the daughter of a Greek pirate, Lambro. Lambro returns home, as our extract relates, to find himself reported dead and a feast in progress.

Byron borrows for his poem the *ottava rima* stanza, used by Italian poets for heroic poems. The first six lines in each stanza repeat the same two rhyming sounds alternately; the last two lines form a rhyming couplet. The lines are the common ten-syllabled iambic lines; in Italian they were of eleven syllables, as Byron's also are when he uses a two-syllabled rhyme (e.g. ll. 2, 4, 6, 8, etc.).

10. *Mamots*: tribe inhabiting Maina, in the extreme south of Greece.<sup>†</sup> They claimed to be descendants of the ancient Spartans and they took a prominent part in the war of liberation from Turkey from 1821 onwards.

37. *hospitable cares*: i.e. entertaining Juan.

38. i.e. the sea at the edge of the coast being shallow

66-8. Ulysses on return from Troy, after years of wondering, and being given up for dead, found his wife Penelope still faithful to him, and contriving to evade her many suitors.

72. When Ulysses returned to Ithaca, dressed 'in rags like a beggar, his old dog Argus recognized him, crawled to him wagging his tail, and died.

73. *sea-solicitor*: a satirical jibe against lawyers. A few stanzas earlier Byron had compared his depredations to a Prime Minister's taxation; and wrote that Lambro

in an' honester vocation  
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery journey,  
And merely practised as a sea-attorney.

103. Pyrrhic dance: the ancient war-dance of the Greeks, performed in armour to music.

143-4. The tale-teller is recalling how Circe in the *Odyssey* turned men into swine by her magic potions. Byron twists this into satire by suggesting that this is what mistresses in actual life do to their lovers.

170. Understand 'will lie' again after *Greeks*.

171. *such people*: lying gossips like the Greeks.

### PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

Percy Bysshe Shelley, the most ardent in temperament and revolutionary in outlook of the Romantics, is the most purely visionary poet in English literature. His poetry is remote from the ordinary interests and pursuits of men; it was in his own words 'a devotion afar from the sphere of our sorrow'. 'You might as well go to a ginshop', he declared, 'for a leg of mutton as expect anything human or earthly from me.' Arnold thought him a 'beautiful and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain'. But in his passionate hope of a world delivered from evil, and made subject to love (the subject of his great lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound*) he attained a true prophetic note, the reverse of ineffective. As a nature-poet, he united to an observation almost as fine as Wordsworth's or Coleridge's a more ethereal imagination which bathes his scenes in glowing light. His favourite themes of nature are scenes of the sky rather than landscapes. His idealism makes him a philosophic poet, embodying in his poetry a view, derived from Plato, of Nature as the temporary and illusory manifestation of the ultimate and eternal Reality (see for example, *Adonais*, stt. XLIII, LII, LIV). The intensity and fervour of his imagination made him one of the great English lyrical poets, pouring, like his own skylark, 'his full heart in profuse strains of unpremeditated art'. The two poems here chosen exhibit some of his greatest gifts; but hardly anything he ever wrote was lacking in either power or music.

*Ode to the West Wind*

This poem of 1819 is one of the finest of Shelley's lyrics. 'It combines with the highest degree of imaginative quality', writes Herford, 'the two other characteristic notes of Shelley's lyrics—personal despondency and prophetic passion. He faints and falls like a dead leaf. . . . But these faltering accents become trumpet-tones as soon as he utters, not his own sorrow, but the woes of man. Then the weary child becomes a prophet.' The passion of the poet communicates itself to the very metre, which 'sweeps along with the elemental rush of the wind it celebrates.'

Each stanza is of 14 lines, which divide up into four divisions of three lines each, rounded off by a concluding rhyming couplet. Shelley adopts a device of the Italian metre, the *terza rima* (in which Dante wrote *The Divine Comedy*), in that he links up his triplets by making the end sound of the middle line of one triplet the rhyming sound of the first and third lines of the next triplet.

9. i.e. the warm wind of Spring, blowing out of bright blue skies.

16-17. In the storm sky and sea intermingle. The clouds are therefore like leaves shed from the intertwining boughs of trees. Thus the effect of the wind in the sky in this stanza is linked up with its effect on the earth in st. 1.

23. *The locks*: the ragged edges of a rain cloud! The phrase continues as a metaphor the simile of *the hair* in 20.

25-8. The sky, filled with dark clouds, resembles the dome of a tomb; fitly, thinks Shelley, for the stormy night announces the approach of winter and the death of the year.

32. *Baiae*: a fashionable pleasure resort in the Bay of Naples in ancient Roman times.

34. *intensèr day*: sunlight reflected on water being more dazzling than on land.

40-2. Vegetation under the sea is affected by the seasons even as that on land: it changes colour and falls off as leaves from trees above ground do in st. 1.

43;5. Shelley now picks up the images of all three previous stanzas, and applies them to himself.

55-6. Compare his description of himself in *Adonais*, 280; 282-3.

63-4. He recurs to the picture of st. 1.

*Adonais*

This poem is an elegy, written in 1821 of his fellow poet, Keats, who had died of consumption in Rome in February. It follows the traditional form of the pastoral elegy, explain-

ed in the introductory note to *Lycidas*. In particular it imitates and sometimes echoes two famous Greek elegies, of the first century B.C., Bion's *Lament for Adonis* and the *Lament for Bion* attributed to Moschus, but really by an anonymous pupil of Bion. But their materials are transmuted in the borrowing, as when Bion's Cupids become the thoughts and dreams of the dead poet.

The notion implied in the poem (316-42 etc.), that Keats's death was caused by the effect on him of the savage criticism of his *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review* and *Blackwood's*, was mistaken. Keats manfully refused to be daunted by the hostile reception of a poem he himself thought of but poorly; and all his greatest poems were written after the attacks upon him. Yet the hostility of critics, as diminishing the chances of his earning his living by poetry, was one among many heavy blows at this time to Keats's spirits, and may have helped to reduce his power of resistance to the disease.

Shelley was not a close friend of Keats (in his preface to the poem he shows that he did not know the exact date of his death), and his efforts at friendliness had been rather repelled by the latter. Thus the emotion expressed in the poem is not so much personal grief as sorrow at the loss to poetry. The position is very similar in *Lycidas*.

*Adonais* stands out as matched only by *Lycidas* among English elegies, and even *Lycidas* hardly equals it in passion and eloquence. The poem is written in Spenserian stanzas, for which see the introductory note to Byron, *Venice*.

1. *Adonais* the name is Shelley's invention, a modification of Adonis.

10-12. *Urania* in Greek mythology was the Muse of Astronomy, but Milton had used the name (= 'the heavenly one') for the Muse he invoked in *Paradise Lost*, the Muse of sacred poetry. 28-36 show that Shelley has Milton in mind. He borrows from him the name to denote the Muse of poetry in general, regarded as divine and heavenly.

11, 12. Adaptation of 'the arrow that flyeth by day' (*Psalms* xci. 3) to symbolize the anonymous critic's attack which Shelley thought to have caused Keats's death.

25. Shelley recalls Romeo's 'Shall I believe that unsubstantial Death is amorous?' spoken over Juliet supposed dead (*Romeo and Juliet*, V. III. 103).

31. *his country's pride*: object of *trampled and mocked*. The allusion is to the reaction at the Restoration against the austere

morals and Puritan religion of the Commonwealth. The terms are partisan, embodying Shelley's hatred of ecclesiastical religion and monarchy rather than accurate history.

36. *the third*: the other two being Homer and Dante. cf. Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry*: 'Homer was the first and Dante the second epic poet. . . . Milton was the third.'

38. *that bright station*: the pre-eminence of great epic poets. In 41 they are *suns*, compared with poets of more modest aim, who *light tapers*.

65-70. Death, here a female figure, sits casting her shadow within the room, and longing to satisfy her eternal hunger by consuming the body, but restrained for a time by pity and awe. Outside the door corruption is waiting to seize on the body.

73ff. The imaginative thoughts and emotions which, alive, Keats embodied in poetry, are personified as spirits who still surround him as mourners. They can no longer, enshrined in new poems, fly from mind to mind, bringing inspiration.

88. Keats in death is like the garden of Eden, ruined after Adam and Eve's sin and expulsion: and the weeping Dream is like the angel guarding the garden.

91-9. The details in this stanza are borrowed from Bion's *Lament for Adonis*, where it is Loves (Cupids) who are mourning and the bow and arrow are natural as the constant weapons of Cupid. Here they are not really suitable.

102. *the guarded wit*: the critical intellect, always on its guard against the charms of poetry.

107. *the cold night* is object, not subject, here

132-5. Echo was a nymph who fell in love with Narcissus. When he paid no heed to her, she pined away, and was metamorphosed into an echo.

140. See note on *Lycidas*, 106

141. Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection in water, and perished through plunging in to join the beloved form. *To both* i.e. to the flowers which bear their name.

145. Shelley is remembering that Keats wrote a great Ode to the nightingale.

166-7. See the story of Creation, *Genesis*, 1. 2-3. *Chaos*, the Greek

151. Cain was the first murderer. See *Genesis*, iv. 1-15. word for formlessness, is used by Milton of the world before creation (*Paradise Lost*, I, 9-10).

172-80. In physical nature there is no extinction, only a change of form. The corpse itself fertilizes the ground and produces sweet-smelling flowers, which make a mockery of the processes of decay beneath the ground. Shall then the mind alone within the body perish? That would be as if a sword inside a sheath were destroyed by lightning, while the sheath itself does not perish.

199-207. Urania, wrapt in the gloom of her sorrow, is like a wild and dreary night in autumn, with storm-clouds sweeping through the sky.

208-16. Earth and humanity, insensitive to great poetry, are like a country whose roads are full of sharp, pointed stones, which wound the Muse of poetry's feet as she enters earth from heaven.



The image, especially its conclusion in 215-16, is somewhat of the nature of a conceit, and yet impressive.

217-19. Urania's presence momentarily revives the corpse. Somewhat fantastically expressed by Death's blushing with shame, and thus, since it is the essence of death to be pale and bloodless, annihilating herself.

228. *heartless*: not 'cruel', but 'bereft of Adonais', who is her very heart.

235-43. Why did Keats provoke the critic's devouring wrath while too young and inexperienced to cope with him?

240. Wisdom is compared to a shield whose polished surface reflects objects, in allusion to the shield which Pallas Athene, goddess of wisdom, gave to Perseus, the rescuer of Andromeda from the Gorgon Medusa. By looking at Medusa's reflection in the shield as he cut off her head, he escaped the petrification which direct sight of her produced.

248-52. The allusion is to Byron's attack on critics in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* after his first volume of poetry had been unfavourably reviewed. In routing his critics he is compared to Apollo slaying the great serpent, the Python, for which he gained the title *Pythian*.

253-61. The great poet is like the sun: his critics like the insects who swarm in its rays. When he dies, they are forgotten for ever, while his fellow poets, like the stars after sunset, continue to illuminate the world.

262. The traditional mourning procession is here made up of contemporary poets. *Mountain shepherds*: see note on *Lycidas*, 32-3.

264. Byron is called *the Pilgrim*, because the pilgrim of *Childe Harold* is palpably himself: *of eternity* suggests that his poetry is immortal, and his true travels are in the realm of imperishable thought.

269. *The sweetest . . . wrong*: Thomas Moore, some of whose lyrics lament the political wrongs of Ireland.

271-306. Shelley himself now comes.

274-9. Actaeon was punished for gazing on the goddess Diana while she was bathing, by being torn to pieces by her hounds.

281-3. cf. *Ode to the West Wind*, 55-6.

283. A bad line, impossible to scan naturally as five iambs.

298. *partial*: explained by 300. Shelley, believing himself threatened by early death, saw in Keats's fate a prophecy of his own.

301. *Obscure* but probably refers to the fact that his poetry was not appreciated. Voicing his unusual idealism, it was to the folk of his time like verse in an unknown tongue.

306. A daring suggestion. Shelley had left his own country reproached by his fellow countrymen as a profligate, and therefore was like Cain, a fugitive from men, with everyone's hand against him (see *Genesis*, iv. 11-15). But Shelley himself claims to be like Christ, suffering because his ideals were too high for men. *Branded*: as Cain's with the 'mark' on it (*Genesis*, iv. 15). *Ensanguined*: as Christ's with the crown of thorns (*Gospel of Mark*, xv. 17).

307 ff. This is Leigh Hunt, Keats's special friend, who had encouraged and influenced him in his first attempts at poetry.

316-20. Here Shelley remembers lines from *The Lament for Bion*, which translated run—'Poison came, Bion, to thy mouth, poison thou knewest. What mortal man so heartless as to mix or give poison to thee whilst thou wert speaking? Surely he evaded the music.'

322. *one breast*: the murderer's (317), i.e. the critic's.

334. Here begins the change of tone from grief to something like joy. cf. *Lycidas*, 165. and introductory note to that poem

336. *wakes or sleeps*: Shelley is non-committal on the issue of conscious survival. In what follows a merging with the Infinite Spirit is indicated.

342. The critic is so devoid of any spark of the divine that when he dies even this impersonal immortality will be denied to him. cf. 360.

343 ff. Shelley held a view of life analogous to the doctrine of *maya*. Phenomenal life is of the nature of illusion, a dream. Death is a waking from the dream to reality. cf. 460-5.

361-80. Absorption into the Infinite means that Keats's spirit, united with Nature, manifests itself in all Nature's beauty.

380. *made more lovely*: by describing it in poetry.

381'7. An expression of Shelley's semi-pantheistic philosophy. Like Wordsworth he believed in a Spirit pervading the Universe (cf. *Tintern Abbey*); unlike him he thought Nature to be an imperfect and obstructive medium of the Spirit's manifestation. Hence *dull dense world*, and the terms of 384-5.

388. Without noting the transition Shelley passes from the poet's immortality to the immortality of his poetry.

395. *the dead*: great poets of the past; really, the influence of their poetry.

397. i.e. great poets like Chatterton who have died prematurely.

399-401. Thomas Chatterton (1752-70) author of the alleged fifteenth century *Rowley Poems*, in imitation Middle English, committed suicide before he was 18 years old.

401-3. Sir Philip Sidney (1554-86), courtier, soldier, poet and man of letters. His *Sonnets*, his *Arcadia* and *The Apologie for Poetrie* are famous. He died of wounds on the field of Zutphen after giving up a glass of water to a dying soldier.

404. *Lucan*: Roman poet who wrote the *Pharsalia*, an epic poem on the wars of Caesar and Pompey. Condemned to death for conspiracy against Nero, he killed himself without hesitation. Shelley had an exaggerated idea of his poetic merit.

411-14 These lines combine the idea of heroes deified after death and assigned a particular star as their domain, with the notion of the music of the spheres.

414. Shelley remembers a couplet of Plato's which he printed as a motto on the title-page. Translated the lines run: 'Once thou didst shine as the morning star among the living. Now, having died, thou shinest as the evening star among the departed.'

415-23. Extremely obscure. Of 422-3, I know no satisfactory explanation. The idea of the rest is that since the mind can successively apprehend infinite space and a dimensionless point, it is ridiculous to mourn for Keats as though non-existent because he is



no longer localized in space. Freed from the body, his mind has escaped all spatial limits.

424 ff. Keats's burial in Rome confers honour on Rome, not on Keats. Shelley despises Rome's military conquests (429), sages and poets, *the kings of thought*, are the true conquerors, and alone deserve remembrance (430-2).

439 ff. The Protestant cemetery in Rome, where Keats was buried is meant.

444. *pyramid*: the pyramidal tomb of one Caius Cestius. Nothing is known of him.

453-5. Shelley is probably referring to his own loss, of his son William, also buried in this cemetery.

462-4. The image is perhaps not of a literal glass dome of many colours, but (characteristic of Shelley's interest in science) of a prism through which the light, passing, is split into the various colours of the spectrum. This is another expression of Shelley's view that the visible Universe, with its multiplicity of phenomena, misrepresents the final reality, which is, not manifold, but undivided unity. The idea, and the terms, the One and the Many, derive from Plato.

466-8. Another statement of the same idea. All sensible beauty, whether of Nature or Art, is a weak and imperfect representation of ultimate and essential beauty.

478-86. Shelley tends to use abstract terms for the Supreme Being sustaining the Universe. cf. Wordsworth in *Tintern Abbey*, 93-102. Of his many terms, Beauty and Love are the most frequent.

487-end. Shelley, in the exaltation of his spirit, feels that he is about to escape from the body and the *dream of life* (344), to unite with Keats in the world of Eternal Reality.

## JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

John Keats only lived for 25 years, but his greatest poetry belongs to less than as many months. His first published poems, of 1817, are immature except for one or two pieces, such as the *Sonnet on Chapman's Homer*. Even his first long poem, *Endymion*, (1818), was undisciplined in its profusion of beauties, 'a feverish attempt', as he himself said, 'rather than a deed accomplished'. But there followed, in the 20 months from June, 1818, to October, 1819, a series of matchless poems, narrative and lyrical, of which *Hyperion*, *The Eve of St Agnes*, the great *Odes*, and *La Belle Dame sans Merci* are among the greatest.

Keats's art, unlike Wordsworth's and Shelley's, had no extraneous purpose, moral, political, or philosophic; but only the aim of revealing beauty. And he found beauty everywhere, in nature, in art, and in human life. He is the

most richly sensuous of our poets. Where Shelley's was a poetry of impalpable ideas and visions, Keats's was of the concrete world of the five senses. Yet his *Odes* are finely touched to fine meditative issues, and an undertone runs through his poems of brooding thought—on 'the agony, the strife of human hearts'.

Greek mythology and medieval life specially appealed to him as themes for poetry; but whatever his theme, he invested it with the glamour of high romance. He was a very great artist, with two supreme gifts—the gift of verbal magic, in epithet and phrase ('I have looked on fine phrases as a lover', he said of himself); and a pictorial and plastic quality of imagination which fills his poems with marvellous verbal pictures and effects like those of sculpture. His range is limited, as might be expected of so young a poet. But Matthew Arnold is not alone among critics in feeling that 'he is with Shakespeare'.

### *The Eve of St Agnes*

This poem was written in January, 1819, in the early days of his love for Fanny Brawne, before the rapture of his passion had given way to anxieties and doubts. No poem is richer in colour, or fuller of pictures and effects as of sculpture (e.g. 34-6; 76-7; 128-31; 208-25), or more pervaded by an atmosphere of romantic glamour. But it also shows considerable narrative and dramatic power. Running through it are also effects of contrast, the chief of which is that between the youth and glowing warmth of passion in Madeline's room, and the cold outside, and the age of the Beadsman and Angela. The story, derived from a romance of the Italian writer, Boccaccio, combines the situation of *Romeo and Juliet* with the happy ending of *Lochinvar*. Its central scene recalls, with a difference, the bedchamber scene in Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (II. 11), which it also, consciously or unconsciously, echoes more than once.

The metre is that of the Spenserian stanza, for which see introductory note on Byron, *Venice*.

1. *St Agnes' Eve*: January 20. The superstition connected with this day is told in 46-54.

5. *Beadsman*: one who receives support in return for praying for the souls of the dead. *Bead*=prayer.

14-18. Along the sides of churches are often placed monuments in the shape of tombs—on which are carved the effigies of the dead knights and ladies in an attitude of prayer. These monuments are sometimes surrounded by black iron railings, which to the beadsman suggest Purgatory, where the souls of the dead are imprisoned. *hoods*: of the ladies. *mails*: the knights' armour. *icy*: because they are of cold stone.

21. *Flattered*: he thinks for a moment the music is for him.

47-9. The idea is that her dreams (*visions of delight*) will show her future husband.

55. Before this line Keats has cut out an original stanza, as inferior, which prepared the way for Porphyro's feast of cates (173 ff, 264 ff).

58. 'I do not use *train* for *concourse of passers-by*, but for *skirts* sweeping along the floor.'—Keats to his publisher, June, 1820.

70. *faery*: the ideas about St Agnes' Eve had to do with angels, but Keats more than once writes as if fairies were concerned.

71. Two lambs were blessed at High Mass on St Agnes' Day in Rome, and from their fleeces a cloth for religious uses was woven by nuns of St Agnes.

81. cf. *Cymbeline*, II. 11. 16-17. 'That I might touch, But kiss; one kiss!'

82-90. Here comes in the *Romeo and Juliet* motif.

117. See note on 71.

120. cf. the witches in *Macbeth* (I. III. 8): 'And in a sieve I'll thither sail'.

124. *the conjurer plays*: is summoning to her aid spirits of the dead, i.e. St Agnes.

125. *deceive*: a wish—'may they deceive'. Angela does not believe that Madeline's dream will prophesy the truth; but prays that it may be sent by good angels, and so be harmless.

137-8. *in his . . . riot*: made his heart beat tumultuously. *Purple*: the colour of the blood surging to and from his heart.

140-1. The allusion must be to some story not yet tracked down. The usual explanation, that it refers to the Lady of the Lake who in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* imprisoned Merlin in a tree during a storm, and that *the monstrous debt* is Merlin's own birth to a demon father, is quite unsatisfactory. The storm, which on this view justifies *such a night*, is not mentioned till 322, and the phrase *the monstrous debt* is not suitable to express the fact of the demon's paternity.

206-7. Keats recalls the Greek legend of Philomela, whose tongue was cut out to prevent her telling of the outrage done to her, and who after death was metamorphosed into a nightingale.

241. Missals were often furnished with metal clasps to shut them. The image suggests the time of the Crusades, when the Saracens, often called 'Paynims', would use Christian churches for their own Moslem prayers, but would not unclasp the Christian prayer-book.

251. *carpet*: Here and in 360 the one detail of the poem not fitting the Middle Ages, when rushes, not carpets, were used to cover the floors.

253. *the faded moon*: the progress of time is indicated. Moonlight is the setting of the narrative from 77 on (see 112, 200, 217).

262. *azure-lidded*: Keats echoes Iachimo's words of Imogen's eyelids: 'those windows, white and azure laced With blue of Heaven's own tinct.' (*Cymbeline*, II. ii 22-3).

266. *soother*: Keats's coinage. There is no real adjective 'sooth'.

267. *tinct*: Spenser uses the adjective in this sense, but Iachimo's words quoted above are still in Keats's head—unconsciously, since Iachimo uses it as a noun.

262-70. The romantic note is very strongly marked in this stanza, where to the purely sensuous appeal is added the glamour of romantic or exotic places (*Fez, Samarcand, Lebanon*), and romantic or unfamiliar words (*argosy, manna, cinnamon, lucent, tinct, soother*).

292. There is an actual poem by Alain Chartier with this name ('The Fair Lady without Pity'). *Provence*: in S. France, the home of the troubadours and their poetry of chivalry and love (cf. *Ode to a Nightingale*, 14).

298 ff. Madeline had been seeing her lover in her dream: but now she sees him deadly pale, which changes her joy to sorrow. Her words disclose to Porphyro her love for him.

316-22. Porphyro's returning colour makes him so like the Porphyro of her dream, that the two images blend, and she relapses into sleep.

322-4. The storm begins, gently at first (*like Love's alarum*), but quickly increases to fury (327).

328-9. Madeline, between sleep and waking, hears 'no dream', and confusedly reflects—'then after all Porphyro is not to be my husband'. Then she wakes up fully, and realizes that he is actually present (330).

336-7. The images are drawn from chivalry. As Madeline's protector he will be like a shield, shaped like a heart, and red in colour, to represent his love which sends the blood surging to his heart (cf. 136-8). Then, with a change of image, Madeline is like a shrine, and he like a pilgrim who almost dies of starvation as he journeys to worship at the shrine.

343. The storm, he pretends to believe, is sent by the fairies for their sake. Wild though it appears, it is a boon, as it will drown the noise of their escape.

351. *southern moors*: originally, 'Dartmoor', which places the scene in England. On second thoughts Keats decided to leave the locality 'thrillingly vague' (Colvin).

### *Ode to a Nightingale*

This poem, of early summer, 1819, was occasioned by a nightingale which sang in the garden of the Hampstead house where Keats was living. The poem is one of five or six fine Odes of this year, which display Keats's power as a master of poetic language at its highest. They are remarkable also for their note of reflection—'richly meditative Odes'.

as Herford has called them. Here the thought is of the contrast between the joy and beauty and apparent permanence of the song of the nightingale, and the sorrow and transience of beauty and joy in human life.

The form of stanza is Keats's own invention. It consists of 10 iambic lines, which divide into a set of 4 with alternate rhymes, and a set of 6 rhyming *abc abc*. A marked feature is the short 7th line, with 3 feet instead of the 5 of all the rest.

1-2. The intensity of Keats's joy in the nightingale's song has passed into a dull ache with a benumbing, stupefying effect.

4. *Lethe*: the river of Hades, dipping in which caused oblivion.

11-20. Keats desires complete absorption in the bird's song, and unconsciousness of the world. He thinks of wine as a way to induce this.

12. Wine improves by age, if kept in cool cellars. Here Keats's cellar is to be a deep trench in the earth.

14. *Provençal song*: see note on *Eve of St Agnes*, 292. To Keats's imagination the wine is the more delicious because of its association with minstrelsy, and the joyous, open-air life of S. France.

16. *Hippocrene*: a fountain of the Muses on Mt Helicon: hence metaphorically, the source of poetic inspiration. But red wine, thinks Keats, is the true inspirer of poetry, rather than the colourless water of the original Hippocrene.

26. Keats had witnessed this when he had watched his brother Tom dying of phthisis the previous December.

31-4. Not wine, but poetry, will best transport him to the forest *dim* where the nightingale sings. In Titian's picture, *Bacchus and Ariadne*, which Keats remembers here and in *Endymion*, leopards accompany Bacchus.

35-40. The bird is already a nightingale of the mind, not the bird of the Hampstead garden.

50. The sound of the line, partly owing to its numerous sibilants, reproduces the murmur of the flies.

60. *requiem*: a hymn praying for rest of soul for the dead. The bird's song would be this for Keats if he died in the forest. *a sod*, i.e. as insensible as a clod of earth.

61 ff. A poetic truth which is, logically, a fallacy. Individually both men and birds die: only the race in each case survives. But to the poet's imagination, as he goes on to explain, the bird is the same bird through all human generations. The imperishability of the beauty of the bird's song is the prosaic fact which corresponds to the poetic fancy.

62. Among men, each succeeding generation in the struggle of life tramples on its predecessor. Not so, thinks Keats, with the bird.

66. Ruth was a Moabite married to a Jew in Moab. After her husband died, she insisted on migrating with her mother-in-law, Naomi, to the 'alien' land of Judah in S. Palestine. There she



gleaned corn in the fields of a kinsman of Naomi. See in the Bible, *Ruth*, chs. i and ii.

69-70. A good example of Keats's command of the magic of words. The lines conjure up by their suggestions the very essence of romance. *Magic casements*: i.e. listeners at the open windows of enchanted palaces.

75. *Plaintive* seems inconsistent with 5, 6 above, but Keats's sorrow at being recalled to reality projects itself on to the bird's song. Moreover the traditional idea of the nightingale's song is that of a plaintive lament.

### ALFRED, 'LORD' TENNYSON (1809-92)

Lord Tennyson was, like Keats, a very great poetic artist. He had a measure of Keats's gift of pictorial presentation, and to it he added an even more astonishing command of the musical resources of language. At times he approached Keats in verbal felicity. As a nature-poet he is remarkable for the fidelity and minuteness of his observation. Though in the twentieth century he has suffered detraction, and though he is not now considered the great philosophic poet, reconciling science and religion, that he desired, especially in *In Memoriam*, to prove, he remains high in rank among English poets; and he has bequeathed to his country a remarkably large body of work on a very high level of poetic excellence.

His published work extended over a period of nearly 60 years (from *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* in 1830, to *Demeter* in 1889); and while every volume contains some of his best work, few contain much that is not at least good poetry. Thus he is as nearly uniform in quality as his predecessor in the Laureateship, Wordsworth, was markedly unequal. His most perfect poems are short ones, largely lyrical, like *The Lotos-Eaters* (here selected) and *The Dream of Fair Women* (in the 1832 volume); *Ulysses* and the *Morte D'Arthur* (1842), *Crossing the Bar* (1889), or even briefer snatches like '*Break, break, break*', and *The Eagle*. His more ambitious works, *Maud* (1855), *In Memoriam* (1850), *The Idylls of the King* (1859, 1869, 1872) are as wholes less perfect, though they all contain some of his most exquisite poetry.

*The Lotos-Eaters*

This poem is based on a story in Homer's *Odyssey*, Book IX, where Odysseus (Ulysses) and his comrades come to the land of the Lotophagoi (Lotos-eaters). The fruit of the lotos induced a state of lethargy and forgetfulness, desire for idle ease swamping all effort and aspiration. When two of his company had eaten the fruit, Ulysses got the rest away before they too were drugged by it.

Tennyson marvellously conveys the atmosphere of dreamy ease, not only by the details of his description and of the Song, but also by the sound and melody of his verses. The lulling smoothness of most of the verse is enhanced by the contrast of occasional lines in a different key. Contrast the drowsy effect of such lines as 50-6, or 99-101 with the sharp cries of 57-9 or 84-5, and the sudden energy of 151-2, with its emphatic vowels and consonants. Tennyson in this poem shows himself a great artist in diction and music; a master of effects devised to make the sound correspond with the sense. His use of vowel music is very pronounced, and assonance in particular is noticeable throughout. A few instances are noted below; the student should look out for others.

In the introductory narrative Tennyson uses the Spenserian stanza: in the Choric Song of the lotos-eaters completely irregular stanzas, which differ from one another in the number and rhyming order and nature of the lines composing them, while in each stanza the length of different lines, and from time to time the rhythm, varies. In the first seven stanzas of the song iambs prevail, here and there varied by a trochaic line; in stanza VIII the metre changes to trochaic rhythm, and the lines are prolonged to 13 or 14 syllables.

5-6. Nature throughout embodies the languid indolence and inactivity of the lotos-eaters' ideal. Thus too the sunset is under a spell of stillness (19), the poppy hangs in sleep (56), and the amber light seems to dream (102). 24 sums up this aspect.

9. The line reproduces in its rhythm the fall and pause and fall which it describes.

10-16. The vowel sounds are harmoniously varied; but o's stand out in 10-13, while ee's sound at intervals, and largely take the place of o sounds in 14-16.



17. Here alliteration (*s, sh, d*) is combined with the assonance of cognate vowel sounds (*oo, ū ew*): in the next line the assonance is still more marked (*ū, ō*).

24-6. Repetitions or similarities of sound (*all, al, seem, same*), and marked assonance with *e* sounds, enhance by correspondence the sense.

25-7. In Homer the lotos-eaters do not approach the ship, and only two mariners, sent to spy out the land, actually meet them and eat the lotos.

30-6. The vowel sounds *ee* and *ā* predominate, the *ee*'s recurring in 39, 41, 42.

40-56 have the tone of a lulling chant, to which the predominance of sibilants and of the liquids *l* and *r*, the use of echoes (*music, tired, waters walls*), the fivefold chime on *sleep*, and the *i* and *ee* assonance, all contribute.

50-1. Note the repeated *i*'s.

59-69. The device of repetition (*all things have rest, we toil alone, we only toil*) is repeatedly used; e.g. in stanza IV (*dark-blue, life, let us alone, clumbing, ripen, death*).

70-83 The effortless ease (*takes no care, hath no toil*) of all Nature's processes is emphasized as the justification of the lotos-eaters' longing for rest.

99-107. More assonance with *ee*, and alliteration with *s* and *f*, *cr* (106, 7) and *ml* (109-10).

113. See note on *Lycidas*, 20.

114-32. The claims of past ties of kindred as a ground for return are repudiated on the plea that the wanderers will have been forgotten, and if there is disorder on their island they are too old and worn for the toil and pain of setting things right.

118. *Inherit us* means more than just 'inherit our property'; the sons have wholly taken their fathers' places in men's thoughts and affections.

133. *amaranth*: the *amaranthus* of *Lycidas*, 149; see note there. *moly*: a magic herb given to Odysseus by Hermes (Mercury) to protect him against the spells of Circe, the enchantress, the drinking of whose cup turned men into beasts (*Odyssey*, Bk. x).

133-44. Note the echoing *ol, lo* sound, and alliteration with the *h* (*c*) sound from 139-42.

142. *acanthus*: a plant whose leaves figure constantly in Greek architecture.

145-55. The *lo* sound runs through the lines till 149, and comes back in 152, 154, while repeated *l*'s go on till 158, and come back, combined with *t*'s, in 163-4. In 152 there is marked assonance with *ō, ō* and *ou* sounds.

155 ff. This idea of the gods as living in impassive indifference to man goes back to the philosopher, Epicurus. In 162 ff. it takes on a darker tinge, the gods taking pleasure in hearing of the sufferings of man. The description in 157, 57, 8 echoes Homer's description of the gods' abode in *Odyssey*, Bk. vi.

169. *Elysian*: see note on Cowper, *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture*, 19

*The Home-Coming*

From *In Memoriam*, Cantos IX-XI and XV-XIX

*In Memoriam*, published in 1850, is a series of elegiac verses, composed over a period of 17 years, rather than a single unified elegy. The sudden death of the poet's greatest Cambridge friend, Arthur Hallam, in 1833 in Vienna at the age of 22, was the occasion for what became one of the most elaborate and prolonged personal laments in literature. Hallam's death was to Tennyson what neither Edward King's was to Milton nor Keats's, to Shelley, a shattering personal loss; and the accents of deep grief sound throughout the poem as they do not in either *Lycidas* or *Adonais*. Like these other great elegies, however, this poem also broadens out into a meditation on the issues of life and immortality. It is fashionable nowadays to sneer at Tennyson's 'larger hope' as springing 'from hungry egotism, not from vision' (Fausset); and to dismiss his discussion of science and religion as hopelessly out of date. If there is truth in this, there is also exaggeration. 'In its essence,' writes Sir J. C. Squire, 'the poem does not date at all.' Parts of it are relatively weak (e.g. 17-20 of our extract), but as a whole it gives noble utterance to deep and original thoughts and profound feelings. The present extract is one of the more purely personal passages in the poem, less consciously studied and less adorned than many, but perhaps the more moving because of its relative directness and simplicity.

The stanza which Tennyson adopted (not invented) for his poem is a comparatively simple verse form of four eight-syllabled iambic lines. The distinctive thing about it is the rhyme order (*abba*), the same as that of the first four lines of a sonnet on the Italian model.

1. *Fair ship*: the vessel bringing Hallam's dead body from Italy to England for burial is addressed throughout the stanzas: it, not Hallam, is meant by *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, throughout.

7. *Ruffle . . . mast*: the track of foam, left by the ship in its speed, will ruffle the reflection of the mast in the sea. *Ruffle* = 'let it ruffle'.

8. *urn*: see note on *Lycidas*, 20.

9-10. 'May no rougher wind make thy course uncertain.'

29-40. The quiet restfulness of the graveyard deludes us men into thinking that to be buried there will be sweeter to the dead man than to lie at the bottom of the sea.

36. *The chalice . . . God*: the cup of wine at Holy Communion, the central religious service of the Christian Church, at which the actions of Christ at the last supper with His disciples are repeated. (See the *Gospel of Mark*, xiv. 22-4.)

49-52. Tennyson is writing from his home in Lincolnshire, where the open wolds stretch downwards to the North Sea.

58. *sway . . . rest*: the sea is so calm that though the waves oscillate, they seem to be still.

63. *The last red leaf*: cf. Coleridge, *Christabel*, 49, which Tennyson is probably remembering.

70-1. i.e. that the ship is gliding over a perfectly smooth, level sea.

74 ff. The restlessness of grief would welcome the restless storm-cloud, were it not for fear that the sea, after all, may not be magically calm.

89-90. A smooth lake reflects even a tiny lark hovering in the sky; but the lake itself remains unchanged by such a passing reflection on its surface. So perhaps the poet's sorrow, though affected by calm or storm, remains essentially unchanged.

129. *pure hands*: the bearers who will carry the coffin to the grave.

141 ff. Hallam died in Vienna. He was buried in the churchyard of Clevedon, on the Somerset coast of the Bristol Channel at the mouth of the Severn.

147-50. *Wye*: a river in Wales which enters the Bristol Channel at the mouth of the Severn opposite Clevedon. When the incoming tide flows up into the river Wye, its babbling sound is silenced till the tide ebbs again (153)

153-4. *the wave*: i.e. of the Wye. *its wooded walls*: the wooded hills forming its banks on both sides.

## ROBERT BROWNING (1812-89)

Robert Browning divides with Tennyson the primacy of poetry in the Victorian age; but the two poets are curiously dissimilar. Whereas in Tennyson the artistic form was paramount, of much of Browning's work the current judgement which he himself cites ironically in *The Inn Album* has truth in it—

The man's a Browning, he neglects the form.

But oh! the thought, ye gods, the mighty thought!

He often sacrifices graces of form to vigour or originality of thought and expression. Even in his more finely wrought pieces, irregularities of diction, idiom or syntax, grotesque rhymes and discordant sounds occasionally found entrance.

Yet at times he can write exquisitely. Browning's favourite mode of poem was the dramatic soliloquy, to which belong the bulk of the poems in the successive volumes, *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), *Dramatic Romances* (1845), *Men and Women* (1855), *Dramatis Personae* (1864), and the two series of *Dramatic Idylls* (1879 and 1880). Tennyson also dealt in dramatic monologues, but did not practise in them the unusually subtle dissection of character of which Browning made the form the medium, and which he carried over into poems not cast in this dramatic form, e.g. *Parleyings with People of Importance* (1887). The same purpose and method is pursued in *The Ring and the Book* (1868), his longest poem, and by far the greatest long poem of the century. Here the tale of the murder by an Italian count of his child wife is told and retold from a dozen different angles by the chief persons concerned. For this kind of psychological analysis Browning had a passion—as well as for the argument which turns an issue over and over and inside out through numerous involutions of thought. A restless intellectual curiosity informs all Browning's poetry; and intellectual strength is one of his qualities. Yet his most perfect poems are shorter lyrics, especially those on love. *The Last Ride Together* is one of the gems of this class, while *Rabbi Ben Ezra* illustrates the poet's power of turning semi-philosophic thought into great poetry.

### *The Last Ride Together*

From *Dramatic Romances*, 1845

Browning's finest lyrics are love-lyrics, and this is one of the best of them. The freshness and spontaneity of its feeling is matched by vigorous thought and original expression, and the swing of the metre exactly fits thought and feeling. 'There is a kind of fire in it', as Keats might say. The eleven-syllabled stanza appears to be Browning's invention. Its iambic decasyllables are arranged in an unusual rhyming pattern—*aabbcddeec*—of which the most distinctive feature is the rhyming triplet in place of a fourth couplet in ll. 8-10.

24-5. *billowy-bosomed* is a finely compressed descriptive epithet. The cloud as a whole is in shape like a bosom; its surface is broken

up into smaller undulations which are like foaming billows. *benedictions* sun and moon and star, pouring down light on the cloud, seem to be shedding blessings on it.

28. By the omission of the initial unstressed syllable, 4 trochees and a final stressed syllable take the place in this line of the otherwise uniform 5 iambi. Note also the internal rhyme. Supply 'that' after *grew*.

31. i.e. the bliss of it surpassed all earthly happiness.

34-6. As gusts of wind unroll and smooth out a crumpled scroll of paper, so the ride in the fresh air, now that he has gained his desire, released his soul from the crushing pressure of his previous suspense.

50 ff. He tells himself that all men share his experience of gaining much less than he hoped for. Execution never quite equals conception (56-9), and even the greatest rewards of life are miserably inadequate (61-5).

62-5. The statesman is rewarded by a single line of epitaph, the heroic general, who loses his life in capturing a post from the enemy, by having his name inscribed in Westminster Abbey.

71. i.e. write poems in rhymed couplets on things of beauty

80-1. *whence we turn*: i.e. the girl's living beauty is superior to the beauty of the sculptor's statue.

93. *a bliss to die with*: a further happiness after death to look forward to when dying.

95. *glory-garland . . . soul*: joy enveloping the soul, which is at once like a festal wreath and a celestial being's halo.

96. *such*: i.e. a bliss fit to die with.

101 ff. The poet imagines a never-ending continuance of the present happy companionship, which would be veritable heaven.

103. i.e. to the sky, where man from earliest times has imagined heaven, the place where life reaches perfection, to be.

### *Rabbi Ben Ezra*

From *Dramatis Personae*, 1864

In this poem Browning puts his own philosophy of life into the mouth of the Jewish medieval scholar, poet and theologian, Rabbi Ben Ezra, or Ibn Ezra, who was born at Toledo in 1092 and lived till 1167. His best-known works were commentaries on books of the Old Testament. The keynote of the philosophy put into Ibn Ezra's mouth is a virile optimism, typical of the poet. Characteristic of him also is the fortitude of st. VI, and the thought of stt. VII and XXIII-XXV—that not achievement but aspiration is the test of a man's worth. As a reflective lyric the poem stands high, for its vigour and fullness of thought and feeling, and effectiveness of expression.



The poem is written in iambic metre, in uniform stanzas of 6 lines each. In each stanza ll. 1, 2 and 4, 5 form rhymed couplets of short six-syllabled lines; they are followed by longer ten-syllabled lines (3, 6) which rhyme with each other.

7-12. The inferiority of youth to age is not due to youth's unsatisfied longings for impossible perfection; that is a divine discontent, which raises man above the animals. This last thought is elaborated in 19-24.

17. Understand 'which', governed by *without*, before *Low kinds*.

42. Animals are content with what is attainable; man alone aims at the unattainable. Hence his very failure is a sign of his success in rising above the merely animal level.

43-72. Browning here condemns alike asceticism and fleshly indulgence which makes the spirit the mere slave of the flesh. The ideal, he says, is that body and soul should work together each for the other's good.

62 Our material environment, including our bodies, may be a snare to the soul, pulling it downwards; and yet in itself it is not only pleasant, but beautiful. Browning therefore compares it to a net made of roses.

79 ff. Age is a pause in man's development; a short time of rest, in which he takes stock of what he has learnt in youth, and gains wisdom for the next stage in the adventure of life, the life after death.

90. As often the poet's construction is elliptical—'When I was young', etc.

94 ff. The glow of sunset, shooting up from the west, is like a whisper, telling that day is over.

124-5. 'Whom' is to be understood after *I* and after *they*.

148-9 'Which' is to be understood after each *All*.

151. From now on, Man's soul is likened to clay, and God to the potter, time with its succession of events being like the revolving wheel, the instrument which God uses to shape the soul.

169 ff. Man's life is now compared to a porcelain cup moulded on a wheel. Round the base (which symbolizes youth, the earliest stage in life) the grooves of the wheel mould the shapes of laughing Cupids which represent the joys of youth: round the rim (which stands for age, the last stage in life) are moulded by sterner pressure grim shapes like skulls, to symbolize the menace of death.

175 ff. The cup is being shaped for use as a drinking cup at a feast. Thus man's life is to be so shaped as to be of service to God, and to rejoice His heart.

186. 'Which was' is to be understood here before *to slake*.

191. *Perfect* is here a verb in the imperative.

## MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-88)

Matthew Arnold, distinguished also as one of the great critics and prose-writers of the century, sought in his poetry to embody scholarly ideals of classical precision and restraint as against romantic exuberance. He owed much both to Wordsworth, of whose works he was the admiring critic, and to Milton; while he reacted in favour of greater austerity against the rich ornateness of Tennyson. Theoretically he held that the greatness of poetry 'depends on the subject'. Practically much of his finest work consists of detachable passages (like the end of *Sohrab and Rustum* or the concluding simile of *The Scholar Gipsy*), or tiny bursts of song like the exquisite *Requiescat*, whose subject is as tenuous as the most rarefied lyric of Shelley. His more ambitious longer poems (or at least two of them, *Empedocles on Etna* and *Balder, Dead*) are doubtful successes, in spite of what, on Arnold's theories, were worthy themes. The first-named is redeemed from failure only by easily separable passages from the choruses. His collected poems are the work of less than 20 years (from *The Strayed Reveller*, in 1849, to *New Poems*, in 1867).

*The Scholar Gipsy*

Arnold found the story on which this poem is based in Glanvill's *Vanity of Dogmatizing* (1661). An Oxford student, compelled by poverty to give up his studies, joined a company of gipsies who 'discovered to him their mystery'. After a time a couple of scholars, former acquaintances, while out riding, 'came across him. He 'told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learnt much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended . . . to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned'. This story well fitted in with Arnold's disgust with modern life, its feverish and fickle activity and lack of any strong conviction, which he voices in this poem as in many others. But though its characteristic wistful melancholy has its appeal, its greater charm lies in its



exquisite pictures of the country round Oxford, and the love of beauty it embodies throughout.

The poem is written in uniform stanzas, iambic in metre, with an intricate rhyming pattern which divides each of them into two unequal parts. Six lines with three rhyming sounds (in the order *abcbca*) are followed by four lines with two new rhymes in the enclosed order (*deed*) familiar to us in sonnets on the Italian model. A distinctive feature is the shorter line of six syllables which ends the first division of the stanza; all the rest are of ten syllables.

30. Oxford lies in a cup, surrounded by low hills. Splendid views of the towers of Oxford Colleges are visible from the hill on which Cumnor lies (see 126-9).

57 *the Hust*: hill above Cumnor.

69 *Cumner*:  $3\frac{1}{2}$  mile SW. of Oxford. Usually spelt 'Cumnor'.

74. *stripling*: an apt metaphor for the rival, still narrow as being near its source, since the word means both 'young' and 'spare in figure'. *Bablock-hythe* on the Thames 5 miles WSW. of Oxford.

79. *Wychwood*. Wychwood Forest, 13 miles NW. of Oxford.

83. *the Fyfield elm*: the identification of this tree is a subject of dispute. Fyfield is a village 7 miles to the SW. of Oxford.

91. *Godstow Bridge*: over the Thames,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of Oxford.

111. *Bagley wood*: some  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles due south of Oxford, on the road to Abingdon.

113. 7. The gipsies hang their ragged garments on the bushes

115. *Thessaly*: an Oxford nickname for the spot.

120. See 50, above.

125. *Hinksey*: Hinksey Hill is  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles SSW of Oxford. N and S. Hinksey are two villages,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles respectively W. and SW. of Oxford.

129. *Christ Church*: the college of that name, founded by Cardinal Wolsey.

149. *the . . . Genius*: in Roman mythology, the guardian spirit assigned to each man on birth, who accompanied him through life as a kind of second self.

171. cf. 120, 50, above.

182 ff. Arnold said this passage referred to Goethe (1749-1832), but in some ways it fits Tennyson better, who became poet laureate in 1850, three years before *The Scholar Gypsy* was published. It has also been suggested that the passage refers to Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881).

201, 2. Not easily reconcilable with the praise of the scholar gypsy for leaving a world of baffled activity (161-5); nor does the description well suit the period of the Commonwealth to which Glanvill's story relates.

207-9. In Vergil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas, in his wanderings after the fall of Troy, came to Carthage and won the love of Dido, its Queen; but deserted her by divine command. See *Rape of the Lock*, 649-50.

Dido then committed suicide. Later Aeneas, descending while still alive to Hades, saw her shade there, which fled from him with averted eyes

232 ff. This elaborate simile, which makes a fine ending to the poem, refers to the Phoenicians as pioneers of navigation. (See *Venice*, 64.) They were succeeded by the Greeks: and Arnold imagines the Phoenicians' first contact with them in the Aegean Sea. The result was to drive the Phoenicians further afield, till they reached the west coast of Spain. While in itself a splendidly imaginative picture, it is not wholly appropriate as a simile. *The young light-hearted Masters of the waves* are curiously unlike the melancholy, perplexed, ineffective Victorians as described by Arnold in 171-206, whom they represent.

### WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-96)

William Morris divided up his incredibly productive life among a dozen different crafts. He was painter, designer, and typographer, as well as poet; and he was a born storyteller, who wrote romantic tales in prose as well as in verse. His literary production, though but a small part of his activity, was considerable in bulk. His earliest volume, of ballads and short narrative poems (*The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, 1858), exhibits in its medieval tone and themes, its vivid, sharply outlined pictorial detail, and its variety of metre and melody, some of the characteristics of the society of artists known as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, of which he and the painter-poet, D. G. Rossetti, were the chief literary members. It was followed by longer narrative poems, of which the chief are *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70), a kind of new *Canterbury Tales*, consisting of 24 long verse stories, classical, Scandinavian and medieval, in various metres: and *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876), an epic poem derived from the Icelandic *Völsunga Saga*. In addition he translated the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*; and in later life wrote a volume of short poems, *Poems by the Way* (1891). Some of these last are of contemporary life; and the best of them are fine lyrics, sounding a new note of bare simplicity conveying intense feeling. But Morris was the storyteller rather than the pure singer; and he is chiefly memorable for his narrative poems, short and long. In these he proves himself the greatest narrative poet in English of modern times.

*The Haystack in the Floods*

From *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, 1858

This is one of several short, spirited narrative poems by Morris of medieval war and love. It relates with sombre poignancy and realism the tragic ending to the love of a French girl for an English knight during the Hundred Years' War in France. The earlier parts of the story can only be vaguely inferred from hints and allusions. The girl has been rescued by her lover, Robert, who is taking her to the safety of Gascony, when near the frontier they are ambushed by the French rival lover, Godmar.

34. *Judas*: 'treacherous friend'; from Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his master, Jesus Christ, to his foes. What the corresponding treachery of Godmar was, we are not told.

45. *Poitiers*: where the English under the Black Prince with 8,000 men overthrew a French army of 60,000 in 1356.

47. *Gascon frontier*. Gascony, in the SW. corner of France, between the river Garonne and the Pyrenees, was one of the last surviving portions of the old Angevin Empire of England in France. At the end of the first part of the Hundred Years' War it, and Aquitaine to the north of it, were assigned to England by the Treaty of Brétigny, 1360.

51. *Those six men* are doubtless the judges of the court appointed to try Jehane on a charge of witchcraft.

52. *the Chatelet*: originally a fortress, then the seat of the royal courts, and finally a prison in Paris.

53-6. Death by drowning was an alternative punishment to burning at the stake for a witch. cf. 108

109. *me*: for me, an archaic usage. cf. 74-5.

## ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-1909)

Algernon Charles Swinburne, a prolific poet, took the mid-Victorian English world by storm with his *Poems and Ballads* in 1866, which defied conventional respectability in its themes and treatment of them, but fascinated people by the amazing skill and freshness of its metres and melody. Swinburne is without doubt one of the great metrists and masters of music in English; but his reputation has dwindled as the novelty of his poetry has died away, and it has been seen that the verbal and metrical cunning conceals a relative poverty of meaning. Swinburne was in part at least the slave of his own skill. His choice of words seems often

determined by sound as much as by sense; his epithets are almost invariably alliterative; and sometimes seem pointless except for this purpose. But he achieves a haunting melody which silences criticism, and lessens our demand for fullness of significance.

### *In a Forsaken Garden*

In this lyric from *Poems and Ballads, First Series* (1866), the poet pictures the desolation of an old ruined garden on the edge of the sea. The metre is mainly anapaestic, a metre of which Swinburne was fond. Each stanza consists of eight alternately rhyming lines, seven of four anapaests each, and the final eighth line of a trochee followed by a single stressed syllable. In the anapaestic lines an iambus often takes the place of the anapaest, while the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th lines in each stanza end with an unstressed extra-metrical syllable, giving a feminine rhyme.

1-7. Note the tendency to alliterative pairs or trios—(*coign, cliff; round, rocks; ghost, garden, steep square slope; blossontless bed; grew green, graves*). The tendency is equally marked in the subsequent verses, and after a time becomes a defect. In 10 and 23 for example, the alliterative *l* and *w* are allowed to run riot.

43. *foam-flowers*: the white foam, floating on the greenish waves, looks like white flowers.

57-64. The roses and lovers of past years are as completely forgotten as though they had never been; so shall be the present-day flowers and lovers, when we are all dead.

77-80. Death itself is said to be dead here, self-slain, because the destruction it has already wrought has left nothing more to change or destroy.

### ROBERT BRIDGES (1844-1930)

Robert Bridges has more than one claim to rank as one of the great poets. He was the conscious craftsman, like Tennyson and Milton. He was a student of prosody, and experimented with classical and other metres in some of his poetry. He stands beside Tennyson for his powers of observation and description as a poet of the English countryside; while his lyrics of human experience are as beautiful as any of his nature poems. At the very end of his life he crowned a career of mainly lyrical poetry by writing a great

philosophic poem in four books, *The Testament of Beauty* (1929), comparable to that of the great Latin poet, Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*.

*'There is a hill beside the silver Thames'*

This poem is a good example of Bridges' power as a lyrical poet of nature. He lingers lovingly over the details of the scene in a way that shows his gift of observation, and his delight in quiet secluded beauty.

The unusual and somewhat intricate form of stanza illustrates Bridges' interest in metrical forms. The metre is iambic throughout. The eight lines contain only three rhyming sounds, arranged in the unusual order, *ababccbc*. The most distinctive feature is the reduction in length of ll 5, 6 and 8 from the ten syllables of the rest to six.

11-12. The swift, straight flow of the stream towards the shady pool reflects the unswerving intention of the river to gain the quiet spot.

13-16. In winter the river, overflowing, has washed away the earth covering the great roots of trees near it; in summer they remain exposed, and the water only flows over the more straggling, thinner fibres.

53-5. The extreme age and old-fashioned attire of the peasant, together with the unexpectedness of his appearance, make him like the momentary (*perishing*) recollection of some forgotten matter from the long-distant past.

60. *Busy* goes with *meadows*, and refers to the apparent flickering motion of the air, produced by the heat haze.

### SIR WILLIAM WATSON (1858-1935)

Sir William Watson has too much the air of an echo of the great masters to be himself ranked as one of them. But, though largely derivative in style, he achieves an impressive dignity and eloquence, which at times rises to a moving beauty of thought and phrase. This is true of a large part of the poem here selected.

*Wordsworth's Grave* (composed 1884-7; published 1890) may claim some originality as combining elegy with literary criticism in a way not easy to parallel. But otherwise it leans heavily on predecessors. Its stanza is that of Gray's *Elegy* (a quatrain of alternately rhyming decasyllabic iambic lines);



in style it reminds one of Arnold. As a poet's tribute to a greater predecessor, it challenges (and can bear) comparison with Tennyson's exquisite lines *To Virgil*; but it takes a wider sweep, and surveys the poetry of more than a century. In so doing it combines acute, though one-sided, criticism of the Augustans with more generous, and on the whole sounder, appreciation of their Romantic successors. These conclusions it often embodies in memorable lines and phrases (e.g. 12; 32; 36; 67-8), which again recall Arnold in their power to sum up felicitously in a few words a whole position.

1-4. Wordsworth is buried in Grasmere churchyard, by which flows the River Rotha (or Rothay): cf. 25.

13-16. The new modes of poetry are compared, one, as empty of meaning, to a hollow spectre, and one, as taking refuge in fantasy, to a beckoning fairy. Both conduct away from truth and reality, to which Wordsworth's poetry recalls us.

29. *Paradise Lost*, with its transcendent theme, is chiefly in Watson's mind. *Translunar*, literally 'beyond the moon', is the opposite of sublunar, terrestrial.

30. Shakespeare, in contrast to Milton, only dealt with earthly human life; but within that limit his range was boundless, his vision clear.

31. Shelley's transcendental poetry, in which the loftiest abstractions are clothed in exquisite imagery, is likened to snowy mountains flushed red with the sun at dawn or sunset—a doubly appropriate image, because dawns and sunset are among Shelley's favourite pictures from Nature.

32. *Wizard twilight* exactly expresses the atmosphere of witchery of *Christabel*, Part I, and the 'dull' moonlight and predominantly pale colours of that poem. 'In *Christabel*,' writes A. C. Bradley (*A Miscellany*, p. 187), 'there is very little colour, and the light is almost everywhere subdued.'

39. *Blast* corresponds to the *tempest* to which the passionate energy of Byron's poetry is compared in 38; *blaze* to the *dazzling glow* to which Shelley's is likened in 37.

41. i.e. not the listless apathy which constitutes the peace of the dead in Hades, after they have passed the river of Lethe, and thus have lost all memory and care for earth and the joys of humanity.

45-8. Watson's contempt for contemporary poetry is marked throughout the poem; cf. 9-12; 121-36.

49-52. *the authentic Presence*: genuine poetic inspiration, in this case Wordsworth's, to whom *his* and *him* refer.

56. *instant*, here an adverb, seems to combine the senses of 'immediately' and 'urgently'.

65-8. The reference is to the Augustan school of poetry, of which

Dryden (1631-1700) and Pope (1688-1744) were the great masters. Watson puts his finger on its limitations, characterizing it as mundane (66), poetry of the city and fashionable society (68), which has lost the vision (*sunlight*), the freshness and naturalness (*dew*), and the passion (*flame*) of seventeenth century poetry

69. i.e. Augustan poetry only dealt with the external surface of life, and was thus like flowers festooning the outside porch of a house.

71-2. Technical skill gave perfection of form to a poetry which yet, lacking vision, was 'ignoble' and 'barren'.

73. It was destitute of passion (*ardour*) and any sense of mystery (*awe*).

74. The poetry was predominantly satiric.

75-6. It lacked any intense feeling for natural beauty even when the poets perceived it—and the parenthesis indicates doubt whether they ever did. The indictment here is exaggerated to the point of falsity. Pope, for example, had a keen eye for beauty of all kinds; and intense feeling often underlies his poetry. But he distrusted, and deliberately avoided, direct expression of such feeling.

79-80 accuse these poets of complete neglect of Nature as a theme

85 ff. The basal realities of human life persisted; though the poetry of the day neglected them, and was thus a poetry of half-truths.

89. *The scholar-sage* is Dr Johnson, and his two satires, *London* (see ll. 117-22, 158-61; and 176-7), and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (see ll. 135-60) are chiefly in view.

91 *the vesture of the age*. the verse-form (heroic couplets) and the antithetical sententious style of the above poems are typical of the age of Pope.

93-6. New poetic notes sound in Collins's *Ode to Evening* (1746) and in Gray's slender sheaf of poems.

100 refers to Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* (1770), which laments the desolation wrought by the encroachments of wealth in 'sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain'.

101: *one . . . skies*. Burns. The metaphor of the plough is chosen, because he himself was a working farmer, ploughing his own land.

110-11. *those Twin morning stars*. Wordsworth and Coleridge.

113-18. These lines express the contrasted ways in romantic poetry taken by Coleridge (*the Dreamer*), who endeavoured to procure for supernatural themes 'that willing suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith'; and by Wordsworth (*the Seer*), who tried to reveal the wonder and mystery of 'life's familiar face'. his tale *The Ancient Mariner*.

127-8. Swinburne and Browning respectively are meant.

149-50 Byron is meant.

151-2 Wordsworth is meant.

173. *Helm Crag* and *Silver Howe* are hills rising immediately above Grasmere, at the NW corner and on the west of the lake respectively.



## FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859-1907)

Francis Thompson, rescued from destitution in London by Wilfrid and Alice Meynell, achieved fame by his first volume, *Poems* (1893). His power of vision, and his command of splendid and lavish imagery, imparted a notably individual accent to his poetry, at times a trifle too mannered, perhaps, yet never without some touch of genuine beauty. If 'strangeness in beauty' is, as Pater thought, the distinctive mark of the Romantic, then Thompson deserves that name. The element of strangeness in his diction, its apparent coinages and its manifest archaisms, are alike a legacy from the Elizabethans and seventeenth century poetry. To these he owed much; to the later Romantics, unless it be to Shelley, little; to contemporary life and literature, all but nothing. He will probably live as the writer of one or two great poems, among them the one here selected.

*The Hound of Heaven*

From *Poems*, 1893

This is one of the greatest of the small company of great religious poems in English. Under the imagery of a hound relentlessly pursuing a fugitive, it represents God as man's 'tremendous lover', whose love never rests till it wins man. It declares that man is for ever trying to escape from God and find happiness in things apart from Him. But the attempt to evade God, and the quest for peace and joy apart from Him, are both vain. To find God is to find again in Him all the other joys which, when we pursued them apart from God, we lost. These thoughts are expressed with a richness of imagery which in its daring at times borders on the 'conceited', yet justifies itself by the passionate sincerity and intensity of the thought and feeling it clothes. In this use of imagery, and in his diction, Thompson is influenced strongly by the Elizabethans.

The poem is in the form of the irregular ode like Wordsworth's *Immortality Ode*; there is the utmost variation between the different stanzas, and within each stanza, in the metrical nature of the different lines. Note the use of a

refrain of 6 lines, repeated with some variation at the end of each stanza except the last two.

1-15. Man's attempts to escape from God are summarized as a whole, detailed exposition of each attempt following later.

4-9. In all experiences alike—sorrow and joy, hope and fear—the poet sought to escape from God, but all alike disappointed him.

16-23. The poet, thinking he had to choose between love of God and human affection, chose the latter, only to find hearts shut against him. Human affection is symbolized by the window with red curtains behind it and a trellis, covered with a creeper, in front of it. The curtains (red, to suggest the heart) and the tendrils of the creeper both represent the heart's feelings.

25 ff. The poet next tried to forget God in contemplation of Nature, especially in its more elemental aspects.

31-2 are addressed to *dawn*; 33 to *eve*.

34. All the elements of Nature are 'ministers of God that do His pleasure' (*Psalm ciii. 21*).

41. The clear blue sky is compared to the monotonous expanse of level prairies in tropical America.

44. The winds are the horses of God's chariot, and the lightning flashes are like water splashing round their feet as they spurn the ground.

52-104. He could find no satisfaction, either in the love of children, or in communion with Nature generally.

69-71. The *azured dais* of Nature is the sky; the flower's *chalice* is its cup-shaped blossom filled with the morning dew, which overflows in sparkling drops.

80-1. *I* (understood from 78) is the subject, and *All that's born* is governed by *with*.

110 sums up the teaching of the poem. cf. St Augustine's 'Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts can find no rest until they rest in Thee'.

111 ff. The poet is finally reduced to a sense of impotence and despair. He awaits what he imagines will be God's stroke to lay him low. But it is love, not wrath, that strikes.

117-21. Thompson recalls, and uses metaphorically, the story of the Jewish hero, Samson, who, taken captive by the Philistines, and ordered to give them a display of his supernormal strength, pulls down the pillars of the hall which collapses on them and himself alike. See *Judges*, chs. xiii-xvi, and Milton, *Samson Agonistes*.

126-30. The metaphor is of a chain of flowers (*blossomy twist*), attached to some ornament, and worn round the wrist. The poet's fancies imagine earth as a beautiful plaything for man; but such fancies are like a chain of flowers in being at once too fragile and too pretty to fit the reality.

130-5. Does God demand the utmost renunciation, like the weed which kills all other flowers, or like the artist who burns wood to make a charcoal pencil?

136-40. The gushing fountain becoming the stagnant pool, fed by

drippings from a tree, represents the eager but fickle (*wavering*) impulses of youth, giving place to melancholy, disillusioned regrets 148-50. The summoner is Death; hence *cypress-crowned*, cypress being associated with death and burial.

152. *heart or life*: God seemed to have demanded the sacrifice of the affections; hereafter will He demand the extinction of life itself?

158 ff. The true explanation is, not that God demanded sacrifice of all other affections, but that apart from Him nothing can bring true joy. In finding Him we do not have to give up, but for the first time truly gain, all the other joys of the heart as well

163-4. God's love, unlike man's, treats the undeserving as though they were worthy. cf. *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, 148-150, and St Paul's *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, i. 28—'things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are'

## WILFRID WILSON GIBSON (1878- )

Wilfrid Wilson Gibson began by writing Tennysonian poems; but later aimed at doing for the lives of North-umbrian working men what Wordsworth did for the peasants of Cumberland and Westmorland. In his realistic portrayal of the grimmer aspects of industrialism, he seems to have inherited the mantle of Crabbe rather than of Wordsworth.

The poem *Flannan Isle*, however, lies a little apart from this main trend of his work. It tells the tale of an inexplicable disappearance of three men in language of apparently artless simplicity, yet so as powerfully to convey an atmosphere of uncanny horror. It is written in irregular stanzas of simple octosyllabic iambic lines with occasional shorter lines; and the rhyme scheme varies from stanza to stanza. The opening stanza is one commonly used in the old anonymous ballads, which are doubtless in Gibson's mind; but the variations of form in the succeeding stanzas depart from the model.

Flannan is the name of a group of small uninhabited islands in the Outer Hebrides off the west coast of Scotland, 21 miles WNW. of Lewis. Whether the poet means his Flannan to be one of these is, perhaps, uncertain.

6 *The news*: i.e. that the lighthouse light is out.

25-6. Their unnatural size, as well as the noiselessness and absence of splash when they plunge into the sea (29-30), suggest that they are not real birds, but evil spirits assuming birds' forms.

28. *half-tide*: becoming visible halfway between low and high tide

44-7. Another intimation of something preternatural.

91. Absolute construction, supply 'being' after *clutch*—'while a cold chill in our blood seemed to catch us by the throat and stop our breathing'.

## RUPERT BROOKE (1887-1915)

Rupert Brooke was one of several poets of great promise who served in the war of 1914-18, and failed to survive it. His premature death while on active service, and the fact that his fine series of sonnets, 1914, voiced the current idealistic view of the war, may have augmented with his own generation his poetic reputation, which has subsequently declined. Yet a freshness of vision in his best poems, and a keen sensitiveness to beauty of all kinds (well illustrated in the poem here selected), entitle him to a permanent place among the English poets. Though of lower rank, he stands with Keats among 'the inheritors of unfulfilled renown'.

### *The Great Lover*

This poem, written in the South Seas in early 1914, is in heroic couplets. But the lines have their own distinctive ring about them, quite unlike Dryden's or Pope's, or that of any previous poet in this metre. Added poignancy is lent to this poem, which looks forward to an early death, by the passing away of its author the next year.

5-7. Brooke at this time was a sceptic with a touch of the cynic in him. It was from this mood of sceptical despair that the war's call to heroic sacrifice released him, as he himself tells in the first of his war sonnets, beginning, 'Now God be thanked who has matched us with His hour'.

8. *the unthinking silence* i.e. death which ends all thought and speech.

18. As an emperor's soldiers are ready to die for him, so Brooke and those whom he loved have been ready to die for the things they loved. *to die*. how to die.

20. Understand 'for' again before *the high cause*.

22. The things he loved are like *eagles*, compelling admiration by their majesty and strength, and soaring pre-eminent above all else. They are also, like *crying flames*, bright glowing objects which irresistibly call for attention.

26 ff. Two things are notable about this list; the diversity of it, and the unusual and unexpected nature of many of the things Brooke singles out for praise. Both features show an acute sensibility, of all the senses at once, which places the writer by the side of Keats.









